The Commonweal

A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts and Public Affairs

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CONTENTS

Let's Have Truth about Mexico 439
Week by Week 440
Publicity for Mexico .....James A. Magner 443
Murder Will Shout .....Michael Williams 446
And Day Is Done (*verse*) ..LeGarde S. Doughty 448
Two Art Exhibitions .....Barry Byrne and Marie Zoe Mercier 449
New Social Frontiers .....Johannes Mattern 451
The City That Knows No Sun (*verse*) ..... Jessica Powers 453
Seven Days' Survey 454
The Play .....Grenville Vernon 458
Communications 459
Books .....Mary Kolars, Craig La Drière, Virginia Chase Perkins, A. K. Parker 462

Previous issues of THE COMMONWEAL are indexed in the *Readers' Guide* and the *Catholic Periodical Index*

LET'S HAVE TRUTH ABOUT MEXICO

WE GO to press before the Borah resolution demanding an exhaustive senatorial investigation of the persecution of religion in Mexico can be voted upon by the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate. It would, therefore, be premature to discuss the action, except so far as to say that, if adopted, and then properly followed up, it would be the most practical step yet taken to acquaint the American people with the extent and gravity of the anti-God movement in Mexico. We should then be able to trace the growth in that unhappy land of the new Caesarism which under the name of the Totalitarian State has already seized upon Russia and Germany, and which constitutes the worst of all the dangers that today threaten civilized liberties and rights.

We cannot, however, believe that the Senate will act favorably on the Borah resolution. But even if it fails to do so—and Senate action, as the World Court voting recently proved, is notoriously unpredictable—the Borah resolution has served to make the Mexican situation front-page news, and will help to crystallize the growing demand on the part of many elements of the American people for a thorough investigation of that situation on the part of some competent body.

When that investigation comes, no point it will need to examine will be more important than the facts having to do with the relations of the Catholic Church to the social welfare of the masses of the Mexican people, in the past, as well as in the future. It is too readily taken for granted by many of those who oppose the present attitude of the Mexican government—which is to say, the régime of the National Revolutionary party, which in turn is dominated by Plutarco Elias Calles—that "the Roman Catholic Church is now reaping the just reward of centuries of social injustice and self-aggrandizement in Mexico."

We quote these words from the *Christian Cen-*

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tury, which does not use them as being necessarily its own statement of the whole case, but which asserts that it is the point of view of many of its readers who are criticizing its own sturdy stand against the anti-God policy of the Mexican dictatorship. It expresses its own view on this point as follows: "Everyone who knows anything about Mexico knows that the Church enriched itself while the people remained in poverty and that ecclesiastics misused their spiritual authority to increase their temporal power. Many details are in dispute, but the main facts are not. Allowing all possible credit to the thousands of priests and monks who have shared the poverty of their people and labored for their salvation, it is demonstrable that through more than three centuries the power of the Church has been arrayed on the side of the ruling oligarchy and against every principle of freedom to which it now appeals in the day of its distress."

And it followed up this statement, which appeared in its issue for January 23, by saying, in its issue for January 30, that the Apostolic Delegate to Mexico, now in exile in Texas, and the Archbishop of Mexico "have put forth renewed denunciations of socialism and socialistic education and instructions to all the faithful to have nothing to do with either." Again, it remarks: "For the Church to underwrite a blanket condemnation of socialism and stake its whole case on the maintenance of the economic system under which the vast majority of the Mexican people have lived in abject poverty is to tie a millstone about its own neck."

But if the editor of the *Christian Century* had read the utterances of the Apostolic Delegate and the Archbishop of Mexico with real care, and with recollection of the fact that these utterances, like the statements of all Catholic bishops, must be interpreted with reference to the defined policy of the Church in regard to such things as "socialism," he scarcely could have committed himself to such extreme positions as those quoted above.

For it is wild, unbalanced, uninformed, partizan pleading on behalf of the extreme denunciations of the Church made by Calles and his clique, to say that the Church in Mexico for three centuries has been "against every principle of freedom to which it now appeals in the day of its distress." It is equally false to say that the present rulers of the Church in Mexico have "underwritten a blanket denuncation of socialism and socialistic education." They could not do so for the simple reason that they are upholding, not condemning, the policy of their Church in regard to socialism, as expressed by the head of that Church, Pope Pius XI, and it should be known to the *Christian Century* that neither the Pope, nor any Catholic bishop, condemns and repudiates socialism without making a common-sense dictinction between the "socialism" of social reformers, and the "socialism" of, say, Marx, Lenin, Bakunin, and their modern exemplars in Russia and Mexico. Many, not all, of course, of the proposals put forth as "socialism" by social reformers are not merely approved by the Church: she herself originated many of them, and promotes their acceptance in season and out of season. On the other hand, the unmitigated, absolute state socialism which rests its whole case upon a denial of religion and of religious rights, the socialism whch is better known under the name of Communism, is and must be condemned utterly by the Church, everywhere, and at all times. This type of "socialism" is what the dictators of Mexico stand for, and this they desire to make compulsory through the new education laws. Of course, the Mexican bishops repudiate and assail such an evil thing.

It is the true stand of the Church on such a major issue as that which should be made known to the world. When even such well-intentioned men as the editors of the *Christian Century* can so queerly miss the chief point of a vital argument, it is no wonder that the secular press, and the general public, are so puzzled. Moreover, it is equally wrong to think or to say that the Church in Mexico has been wholly on the side of the ruthless exploiters of the masses of the people. There have, it is quite true, been some bishops and priests—far too many of them indeed—who feathered their own nests, or the nests of their Spanish lay associates, at the expense of the poor. But that is only a blot, deplorable and tragic, on the page of a glorious story of Christian charity, Christian education, and Christian social progress, carried on in Mexico by the Church. The facts would uphold these statements. That is why the whole truth, not fragments and not perversions of truth, needs to be made known.

Week by Week

The Trend of Events

IT WAS a troubled and cloudy week. Perhaps the reason why hesitation and even fear were visible in so many places was, fundamentally, the creation of doubt concerning authority. So far throughout the history of the New Deal, it was fairly apparent what leadership had control. One might then approve or criticize, but there existed a feeling that we were going somewhere. Is this the case at present? The suspense created by the hearings on the gold clause before the Supreme Court is not entirely due to the adverse effect of an unfavorable ruling. Many are wondering whether the government actions taken thus far are in accord with the Constitution, and whether our present

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needs are likely to tear us loose from that Constitution. Again the Senate vote on the World Court was a serious attack upon the prestige of Mr. Roosevelt as supreme head of the Democratic party. If leading officials in the organization succumb that easily at a critical moment to a barrage of populistic telegrams, just what is likely to happen to party discipline when still more controversial issues are raised? Finally, the week also brought a fairly concerted attack on Mr. Donald Richberg. Bitterly assailed in the name of labor by Mr. William Green, the "NRA dictator" may be slated for political retirement. If so, what is the future of this plan for coordinating the interests of capital and labor likely to be? These are some of the queries which a period of uncertainty has raised. We would repeat that no one interested in the welfare of his country can afford to ignore the fact that rising tides of emotionalism are fast bringing the affairs of the nation to a challenging climax.

The World Court

SHOULD the United States have joined the World Court? Perhaps no question has been more widely debated by the people at large; and among the results of that discussion there was certainly not any increase of clarity as to what allegiance to such a Court would actually mean. People kept on confusing it with membership in the League of Nations; and this in turn was dubbed all sorts of things from a sinister "consortium of international bankers" to a "joke." Relatively few have been willing to visualize the Court as an instrument of American policy, which is the only sane way of dealing with it. For no instrument for peace is worth a gingersnap unless somebody is willing to use it. Now the United States is and has been deeply interested in the prevention of war, especially in Europe. It needs no great power of imagination to sketch the effect on our country of a serious catastrophe in the Old World. What would the Atlantic seaboard be without its shipping and harbors, and what would the United States be if land on this seaboard were worth a dollar a square foot? The conclusion is therefore obvious: we need instruments usable in the prevention of war, and the query is whether the World Court is such an instrument, and a good one. There can legitimately be positive and negative replies. Many persons of the greatest integrity cannot see how membership in the World Court would be advantageous to America under existing political conditions in Europe. It cannot be our purpose to argue with them.

BUT THE Senate vote on the World Court was not based on such considerations. It came after a frank appeal had been made to the nationalistic sentiment of various sections of the population—an appeal which did not hesitate even to use the language of the Psalms to characterize the United States as a country of especial goodness, and which did not scruple to aver that God was on the side of the "No's." Indeed, the sentiment which came to the surface was nationalsocialist, in the sense that work for peace was identified with "predatory internationalism," while isolation was glorified—yes, even sanctified. For our part we cannot believe that such an attitude is less dangerous to the interests of Christian civilization on this side of the water than it is on the other. From the beginning it has been our policy to support to the best of our ability, and to the extent of our knowledge, the encyclicals of the Popes. While these are not infallible, they are certainly the only basis on which collective Catholic Action is possible. Now among those encyclicals there are several which sponsor international action in behalf of peace—an ideal which every Pontiff since the war has blessed. Accordingly, with our whole hearts we thank Monsignor John A. Ryan for his service, in this instance, not only to genuine Catholic liberalism but also to the central ethical integrity of Catholic thought. His action doubtless brought more popular rebuke than praise. He will not have minded that, and neither shall we.

Adequate Representation

IN CONNECTION with Father Magner's article on Mexico in the present issue, we think it well to speak again of Ambassador Josephus Daniels. The comment we published recently (January 18) should, no doubt, have stressed the fact that the Ambassador is not open to the charge of intolerance. His record in this respect is above reproach. During the 1928 campaign, he was one of the few prominent publicists in the deep South who advocated the election of Mr. Smith because of, rather than in spite of, his Catholicism; and at no time during his public career was the former Secretary of the Navy in Wilson's Cabinet within a mile of showing prejudice to any child of the Church. We are likewise convinced that any remarks which Mr. Daniels may or may not have made in Mexico were characterized by everything else but a desire to injure the Catholic cause. Nevertheless we do not feel that the embassy in Mexico City is the right place for him. Mr. Daniels possesses real gifts as a journalist and a politician. He is also, personally, a very fine man. But the situation south of the Rio Grande calls for a genuine diplomat of the very highest type, and this he is not. We are all in favor of pushing Mr. Daniels upstairs, if need be even into the Cabinet or the Court of St. James's. The situation in Mexico is, however, a matter in which we who are Catho-

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lics are sincerely, justifiably interested. We know that opinion there is influenced by attitudes prevailing in the United States. And we feel that we are not getting our money's worth so long as the Mexican Ambassador is not as competent as diplomatic representatives in Berlin were during 1933.

Thoughts on the Films

IN THE course of taking Mr. Walter Lippmann to task, in the drama section of the *Herald Tribune,* for attacking the practise of block booking, Mr. Arthur L. Mayer offers an interesting apologia for that system. Briefly, he maintains that the task of previewing pictures for individual selection would bulk too large for most exhibitors; that block booking distributes good films fairly equitably among exhibitors, whereas free buying would give the pick of them all to a few of the fortunate ones; and finally, that "good pictures" (in Mr. Lippmann's sense), being usually box-office failures, are actually favored by block booking, which forces them into many theatres where they would not otherwise be shown. We do not attempt to deal with these statements beyond saying that, though they obviously have a considerable basis in truth, they cannot represent the whole truth. Block booking will certainly be modified in the near future, even if it will not be wholly suspended: a larger percentage of permitted cancellations, community previewing boards, agreements between local exhibitors, are some of the methods of modification which suggest themselves. Nor do we anticipate Mr. Lippmann's reply, beyond indicating a conviction that it will probably do justice to Mr. Mayer's challenge.

BUT EXAMINING that challenge on our own, it occurs to us to ask how the situation it sets forth would be affected if the motion picture industry regarded itself as something else in addition to an industry. Other purveyors of entertainment—publishers, producers, impresarios—assuredly try to make money. But there also exists in each of those fields a perfectly definite artistic tradition, operating continuously in spite of economic handicaps, recognized even by those who do not serve it, and supported by and large by a respectable portion of the population who look to these fields for their esthetic satisfactions. The experiments, the selectiveness, the fastidious patience required by the wish to promote what is fine and sound and enduring for its own sake, may be costly—though they may also pay large dividends: despite Mr. Mayer's pessimism, even the movies have learned that the masses occasionally support the best. If some small portion of this disinterested spirit belonged to the movies, it would alter the proportions of the whole problem. The right of children to a non-vulgar act—not just to pictures that will not actually corrupt them—the propriety and privilege of satisfying that element in every community which represents superior and special standards, would be accepted, not theoretically, under threat of a boycott, but freely, as the serious basis for one section of production work. There seems no reason to doubt that, with integrity thus guaranteed, the original creators—now the screen's most important lack—would begin to work securely within this medium; that a fair permanent support would gradually be enlisted; and that, admitting special problems to exist in regard to the free selection of films by exhibitors, high-grade production would at least establish the basis on which a large number of those selections would always be made.

Hard Facts and Faith

POSSIBLY it is too formidable a fleet of thought to launch in one short paragraph, nevertheless the idea constantly recurs that most of man's inhumanity to man may be traced to an illusion about the quotient of happiness attainable by the pursuit of happiness in this mortal life. Sin itself, the Faustian bargain, in all its unsocial ramifications stems from this illusion. Yet all the evidence is so clear that roués, for instance, are not successful in the pursuit though they have every advantage that materialism provides. The epicures, the epicene, simply by limiting their expectations and appetites, obviously escape proving the limit of the illusion; and it is a trite observation that they are lonely and cynical individuals. Even the notion that goodness pays is not sustained by the available human evidence, if goodness is considered simply as a shrewd bargain for worldly pleasures. There is no end of literature which exposes the unsuccess of Philistinism in recent decades when it has been fashionable—its inevitable hardening of heart and the frustrations of the Midas touch. The saint has no such illusion, God wot! The dark night of the soul of Saint John of the Cross, the spiritual dryness of Saint Teresa, the fierce agonies endured by Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Ignatius, Saint John Bosco, the Little Flower—to mention only those that come immediately to mind—prove that the pursuit of happiness was no adult infantilism with them. The Way of the Cross is no incitement to despair, to masochism; it is simply a facing of sober fact rather than the embrace of vicious, life-destroying deceits or ignorance. If we could substitute the privilege of the pursuit of faith, hope and charity for the pursuit of pleasure in the preamble of the Constitution, we would have a valuable guarantee, individually and socially viable. Cheerfulness, of course, is something else again; and for its opposite, vide the worldlings. While there is a spiritually informed fortitude which is essential.

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PUBLICITY FOR MEXICO

By JAMES A. MAGNER

Relations between the United States and Mexico are based, Father Magner thinks, on ignorance largely due to the fact that the wrong observers have gone south of the Rio Grande. The status of the Church has been constantly misrepresented, nor have Catholics always understood where the root of the trouble lies. Modification of the Mexican Constitution alone can bring peace; and progress toward this end has been steadily hampered by the lack of contacts between spokesmen for the Church and the political authorities.—The Editors.

IT IS impossible to follow the accounts of affairs in Mexico as related in the daily press without wondering whether something has not gone very wrong with American journalism. Each day brings news dispatches, editorials and articles featuring the unnatural state of affairs in Russia, and charging Hitler with racial discrimination and religious tyranny in Germany, and Mussolini with regimentation and stifling of thought in Italy. Seldom, however, is any reference made to events in Mexico except in terms of commendation. General Calles, who actually represents a Fascist dictatorship far more stringent than any to be found in Europe, with the possible exception of Russia, is represented as a bearer of light and progress to the Mexican people; and his uncompromising persecution of the Church is edited for the world as a conflict with fanatics and agitators.

The organization of a world-wide attack upon Hitler has been achieved largely under the leadership of Jews. Although Christian bodies have suffered disabilities comparable with theirs, Jewish agencies have always been aided by outspoken and gifted writers and publicists. So far as Italy is concerned, Mussolini's suppression of Masonry as a political group may explain to a certain extent such vigorous opposition as has been launched in international circles against his régime. But why has there been so profound a silence on the rankly repressive measures taken by the Mexican government against the Catholic Church?

The answer, I think, lies principally in the unfavorable picture of Mexican Catholicism which has long been presented for Americans and in the materialistic concepts of progress which have been applied with increasing cynicism to discredit the institutions of traditional religion. It is noteworthy that practically all books dealing with Mexican history and manners have been written by non-Catholics and that few of them have dealt kindly or sympathetically with the Church. On the other hand, practically the only American educators and sociologists to gain the ear of the Mexican leaders now in power have been those of a frankly materialistic school, opposed to the principles of Catholic Christianity.

The first point of attack against the Catholic position is that, until its spoliation by the State, the Church in Mexico was extremely wealthy. It has been estimated that in 1824 about one-fourth of the nation's wealth belonged to the Church. That the Church was the principal bulwark of the Indian against the rapacity of adventurers and exploiters, the cultural and spiritual force in the land, and practically the only agency for the relief of distress in a country which had hardly reached the stature of a closely knit nation—these considerations have meant little to most writers.

American observers in Mexico today are struck with the lavish beauty and the number of churches and shrines in contrast with the poverty of the Mexican peon. They return to their homes relating how the Church has impoverished the people to build useless ecclesiastical structures, even compelling them, like slaves, to put the stones in place. The fact that many of these monuments took generations to build, that they were paid for in large part by the wealthy, and that they are a loving spiritual and common possession of the people is given scant consideration. Their periodic looting by Mexican governments and revolutionists is represented as confiscation from an alien enemy. Consequently the utter economic exhaustion of the Church today, after years of expropriations, and finally the nationalization of its proprties, are made to appear as a real benefit for the nation.

That the wealth of the Church constituted a real economic problem for Mexico in the first half of the nineteenth century is undoubtedly true. It is equally true, however, that the arbitrary fashion in which Church properties, from the missions of California to the gold and silver plate and artistic treasures of the great cathedrals of Mexico, were seized in the name of the governments, and parcelled out to the ruling aristocracy, constituted a major crime against justice and gave legitimate grounds for the political defense of Church rights, which anticlerical leaders have refused to acknowledge. In colonial days, it was more or less inevitable that churchmen as well as landowners and military men should have a voice in the government of a territory to which they had given a cultural formation. The same situation prevailed in the New England colonies. And later on, when the properties of the Church

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began to be seized by rapidly changing governments on the pretext of replenishing the national treasury, it was natural that the Church should have protested and sought for political action to oppose this spoliation.

Unfortunately, in its frantic effort to stave off the disintegration of its properties and to preserve its rights and ancient privileges against the advancing tide of liberal politicians, the Church has relied on the wrong men. Promised peace and security by both Santa Anna and Iturbide, in the end it was tricked by both. After turning to Maximilian, who was shortly afterward led before the firing squad at Querétaro, it was branded by local revolutionists as selling out to a European power and by American observers as an enemy of the Monroe Doctrine.

Minority politicians and generalissimos, however, have not ceased to curry the favor of Catholic sentiment in the most shameless fashion, to advance their own cause. Before Villa broke with Carranza, he committed every possible outrage against the Church and after their rift, he complained bitterly that Carranza, in punishing the clergy for their support of the conservatives, had "profoundly offended the religious sentiments of the people by acts condemned by civilization and natural law." It is quite probable that the next general to plan a coup d'état against the régime of Calles will make the same complaint. In the meantime, every appeal of the Church in Mexico for sympathetic action and expression abroad is classified by the party in power as just another manifestation of the Church's lack of patriotism and its willingness to purchase security at the cost of national interests.

The wealth, power and national prestige of the Catholic Church having been reduced to an absolute minimum, a new line of attack has been directed against its surviving elements. The Church is now represented as the uncompromising enemy of popular education and social progress. Persecution of the Church has now become a process of "defanaticizing the masses," eliminating Christian faith as a basis of cultural life, and substituting a sheerly sociological or "socialized" concept of education and advance. The Church is represented as having aligned itself with a capitalistic system, fundamentally opposed to the ancient pattern of communistic village life, upon which the new Mexico must be rebuilt, and blocking the governmental plans for rural education.

This line of strategy, however, is not entirely an innovation, nor does it propose in its positive program anything radically new, apart from its design to remove Christianity, as a motive, from all education. Opposition to Catholic education, and the substitution of so-called enlightened naturalism, began shortly after the wars for independence. It arose in principles emanating from the philosophers of the French Revolution and of the eighteenth century generally, became crystallized in Freemasonry, and in this form was introduced into Mexico. All the members of the revolutionary Cabinet of Cuernavaca in 1855 were anticlerical Masons, and in the Constituent Congress which drew up the Constitution of 1857 the conservative leaders and the clergy were excluded. After 1860, Juarez initiated his anticlerical reforms in earnest, limiting the number of churches open to services, nationalizing ecclesiastical properties, secularizing all charitable institutions, excloistering all nuns, and seizing their properties. This in turn became the basis of legislation and action for the Constitution of 1917, beginning with the nationalization of Church properties, limiting the number of clergy, suppressing the religious orders, and forbidding religious education in the schools. It is quite obvious that these extreme measures were prompted, not by economic considerations or even political necessity, but by a philosophy of life and culture that wishes everything to be subordinated to State control.

That the government has had plenty of opportunity to construct schools and carry on a federal school program without destroying private or religious schools is evident. In 1907, there were 9,620 public schools and 586 Catholic schools, the former with a total attendance of 343,981, the latter with 23,605. There was unrestricted opportunity for the State to develop rural schools in accordance with those principles of "socialization" which the Church had used for centuries, by encouraging native arts and crafts rather than by teaching more abstract sciences of small practical advantage to remote, agrarian communities. Nevertheless the phrase, "There will be liberty of education," was stricken out of the proposed Constitution in 1916; Catholic schools were razed to the ground in an effort to repudiate and remove all evidence of the Church's contribution to culture. And now lest the prohibition of religious teaching be insufficient to destroy Christian ideas, a socialistic concept of education has been introduced as obligatory throughout the nation.

It is interesting to note how cleverly this question of cultural direction has been held up as a red herring by the successive liberal governments of Mexico to cover up the shortcomings of their economic programs. With the exception of the first revolution, which was primarily political in character to secure independence from Spain, the successive waves of national violence in Mexico have based their justification on economic grounds. As a matter of fact, however, the outcome has usually meant simply a further despoliation of the Church or a transfer of property from the defeated aristocracy to the victorious generals. In no case have the masses received any real

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permanent benefit. The revolution of 1855 merely strengthened the old system of feudal agrarianism. The revolution of 1910 was really political in character, after an era of dictatorship and foreign exploitation, and even the agrarian provisions of the Constitution of 1917 were never contemplated by Carranza.

A great deal has been written about the agrarian policies of Calles. Yet Calles, who began as an impoverished school teacher, is now one of the richest men in Mexico, after a period of land manipulation; while the restoration of lands to the free villages, upon which his economic and cultural regeneration of Mexico is to be founded, has proceeded at a snail's pace. In 1931, the Mexican Secretary of Agriculture stated: "Experience derived from the activities of the National Agrarian Commission indicates that many of the villages that have received grants have not solved their economic problem because the land given them does not justify the effort put into it." Even when, and if, the present agrarian movement is completed, only 8.2 percent of the total area of the republic will have been dealt out to the Mexican peasants. The rest will still be principally in the hands of large landowners. One thing, however, appears certain, that Mexican assets are going to be held in increasing measure by Mexicans, and not by foreign capital. Moreover, their orientation will follow given lines, at least until the National Revolutionary party is overthrown or meets with formidable competition, for at present there is but one political party in Mexico, with power definitely emanating from Plutarco Elias Calles.

Nevertheless, it is with fond hopes of commercial advantages from this Fascist régime that conservative American newspapers hold out the hand of congratulation to our sister republic, and speak of a return to the prosperous days of Diaz in which Americans will again make easy money in Mexico. Undoubtedly a friendly spirit ought to prevail between the two countries; but so far as Mexico is concerned, it will not arise from the thought that American capitalists are planning another invasion, and so far as an increasing element of American citizens is concerned, it will not arise from the thought that freedom of liberty and education is being stifled in the name of social progress. The basis of a genuinely amicable understanding between the two countries must be something more solid than the hope of commercial advantage and more convincing than the assertion that progress in Mexico requires the extirpation of religion, the Catholic religion in particular, but all religion in general.

Perhaps it is too much to expect any assistance from commercial interests. And certainly nothing can be expected from American publicists and educators who are radically opposed to the very idea of religion and religious education in any country, let alone Mexico. Something, however, can be done through study clubs, public lectures, articles and demonstrations to give the God-fearing public some idea of what is at stake in Mexico—an issue broader than even the distinction between Catholicism and Protestantism, an issue similar to that in Russia, involving the very existence of religion. The situation is desperate and calls for general action.

I do not believe in a boycott. It is both commercially and diplomatically unsound. There is no sense in arousing simply the antagonism of the Mexican party in power. However, the Mexican government rates American opinion very high, and the arousing of public opinion in the United States would mean a great deal. This must be followed by the appointment of diplomats to contact the leaders of the Mexican government, for the beginning of an amicable understanding and agreement, if at all possible. This matter of contacts seems to be one of the most difficult of obstacles. And even personal contacts will be of little avail if they result merely in the establishment of a status quo. The real obstacle to religious peace lies in the Constitution, and until the clauses of article 130 have been profoundly modified, there can be no real peace in Mexico, nor can the accusations leveled at Calles be more than a personal attack. There can be no doubt, of course, but that the key to the situation lies with Calles; and this factor does not make the situation any easier. Just as a rapprochement was being effected with Calles in 1928 through the offices of Ambassador Morrow and Father J. J. Burke, C. S. P., the assassination of Obregon brought from Calles the typical statement that "direct clerical action" was responsible for the deed.

The mental attitude which Calles reflects goes back through more than one hundred years of Mexican history. In 1833, Lorenzo de Zavala wrote, "The ecclesiastical hierarchy, with its rents, its privileges and its power, is of such a nature that it is not possible to preserve it in a popular government without destroying at the same time the public peace and principle of equality. He who sanctions its existence sanctions perpetual discord." Now, with the Church prostrate and stripped even of legal existence, the clergy deprived of a vote, and bishops scattered in exile, it is hardly probable that the anticlerical and anti-religious chiefs of Mexico will care to reopen the question except under kind but firmly organized and constant pressure. Mexican Catholics as a body have demonstrated their unwillingness to join revolts against the Calles organization; and this may conceivably be brought as fair evidence in favor of reopening negotiations demanded by every principle of enlightened government and educated opinion.

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MURDER WILL SHOUT

By MICHAEL WILLIAMS

THE NEWSPAPERS are busily engaged in preparing the public mind to welcome the advent of some sort of American equivalent for the European censorships which have reduced the press abroad to the status of governmental or private propaganda. This they are doing in (and with) their news columns and advertising pages so effectively that all the noble rhetoric of their occasional editorial articles, in which they preach the high doctrines of the liberty and ethics of the press, are beginning to make their readers sigh, or yawn, or curse, or laugh, according to the various temperaments of the readers in question.

When such readers look at (they do not read) the four or five pages in which the Hauptmann murder trial is being exploited by supposedly conservative papers, the belief which has been rapidly and widely growing among thoughtful people that the press in general has become corrupt and degenerate, and that it is more of a peril than a protection to civilized institutions, is more strongly confirmed than it is even by the gross and flagrantly vicious behavior of the tabloid gutter papers. The latter are the open sewers of our civilization, which, however, do not perform the proper function of sewers, which is to drain off and decently and safely dispose of the filth and waste products of society, but which, on the contrary, sedulously collect and stir up, and preserve, and publicly expose all the contents of the cloacae of human life. Their owners and editors and stock-holders, and their multitudinous readers, seem to search after and to delight in the stinks of vice, as Christians once upon a time at least toiled after virtue and, when found, exulted in the odors of sanctity.

Murder is, of course, one of the facts of life, and one of the gravest happenings which can disturb the order of human society. Moreover, since the first bard or teller of tales began to thrill or edify the first human assemblage, down all the blood-and-tear-stained ages of time, murder has been a theme of absorbing interest to all humanity. The greatest poets, dramatists and novelists have dealt with it to the glory of high art, since the chronicler of the killing of Abel by Cain began the great records, down to Dostoievsky. Certainly it is a subject most properly within the scope of the press, both as to the correct reporting of essential details, and the editorial commentary or moralizing thereupon. But sane citizens of a truly civilized society think that our newspapers are grossly commercializing murder, and, in particular, all forms of crime, and vice, and sin generally, by the way in which they deluge society with their reports of it all—"playing it up," in their own journalistic jargon; jazzing it up; stuffing it into the public's maw by the use of every last device in the enormous technique of modern publicity.

But that is not the worst side of this flagrant degeneracy of the press.

Consider some of the advertisements which enable even many supposedly conservative newspapers to draw down dirty money into their tills. The same advertisements also appear in the tabloids, among them the New York *Daily News,* the tabloid which boasts of a circulation of more than 1,000,000 copies a day. These advertisements are clearly written, are embellished by first-class line drawings, and arranged with the psychological skill which has been so highly developed by modern masters of the art of advertising. They are expressly meant to attract American girls—not married women, but the millions of young unmarried women forming that great group which the Christian civilization of yesterday so genuinely respected, and protected: the maidenhood of the nation, the very fountain source of human life, the potential wives and mothers of the race. And now, disgusting as the task may be, let us turn our attention to the advertising appeals which are made to these young girls, through these great newspapers, which in their editorial columns so sanctimoniously proclaim the civic virtue of nationalistic patriotism and of stand-pat, *laissez-faire* capitalism. "My country, right or wrong, my country!" is the motto of the Chicago *Tribune,* which owns the New York *Daily News.* "Our profits, right or wrong, our profits!" is the motto which these newspapers should display, if they were honest. But the primary point of the whole case against the press—which is one of the most perplexing of our major problems—is that it is not honest.

The advertisements in question are designed to promote the sale of a certain sort of medicinal preparation, to be applied according to specific directions, which are sold together with this nostrum, for the purpose of making sexual intercourse "safe." Not merely safe from the danger of contracting some sort of disease, but "safe" from the peril of procreation. I shall not enter into a discussion of the details of the advertisement. Its language is arranged, with really diabolical astuteness, under some verbal veils of the thinnest kind—actually of the most obvious

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sort of transparency—meant, I presume, to protect the vendors of this drug of the lascivious god, Priapus (and the newspapers which conspire with them to debauch young women), from the liability which hypothetically they might incur under the provisions of whatever laws there may be on the statute books designed to punish these merchants of the agencies of sterilized fornication for using the United States mail. For we should bear in mind that a great deal of this new, so-called "birth control" industry is being carried on in direct violation of federal and state laws.

No doubt, the nostrum thus forced upon the public market is an utterly fraudulent fake. But it is hardly likely that any of the young girls who are seduced into buying it and using it, only to find out that it does not work, will sue the firm of Pandarus and Company, who make it, or the great newspapers which fatten their profits, and swell their dividends, by selling their pages to these vendors of the devil's dope. No; in all probability, such victims of the commercialized vice which in this and many other forms has become one of the big industries of the age, will be too miserably preoccupied in desperate dealings with the doctors who specialize in abortion to give any attention to the matter of suing the dopesters, and the newspapers that aid the dopesters at a price.

Still, you never can be sure! So widespread is the lack of any real sense of moral shame (to say nothing about respect for moral principles) among the great masses of the people—corrupted in large measure by a press which has abandoned nearly all the conventions, still more the principles of traditional western civilization (of which the truths of Christianity were the foundations)—that we may yet witness the spectacle of some girl going into court to sue the makers of the medicament in question for obtaining her money under false pretenses, with several of our leading newspapers named as co-defendants. I wonder how much space the press would give to the reporting of such a case. I wonder still more curiously what the pontifical editorial writers would find to say about the truth of such a case.

Now, please take my word for it, for I have examined the malodorous evidence in the matter (and Mrs. Rita McGoldrick, of Brooklyn, who has collected it, could produce it in court, if necessary)—I say that the advertisements to which I refer are far indeed from being unusual examples of the way in which the birth control movement has been made the profitable occasion for the building up and the powerful promotion of a nation-wide, thoroughly well-organized, trade in contraceptive devices, drugs, instructions and propaganda. There are chains of gasoline stations, for example, not to mention innumerable drug stores and department stores, which sell to all comers mechanical devices wrapped in the most up-to-date fashion in cellophane. There are factories, from one end of the country to the other, for which the great depression simply does not exist so busily are they engaged in making and selling the various mechanical devices and drugs which the department and drug stores and gasoline stations are selling to the amount of many millions of dollars month by month. There are special sales people (sometimes high school students) who ply this trade among the high school girls and boys. The indisputable proofs of this vast, nation-wide industry, from which so many of our newspapers and magazines derive a large part of their advertising revenue, have repeatedly been laid before committees appointed by Congress in connection with the birth control bills. The knowledge of these most deplorable facts has not resulted in checking the movement to legalize the publication and distribution of birth control information (or misinformation) in the slightest. On the contrary, it is fully expected, even by the few men and women who have exerted themselves (in vain) to stem the rising tide of paganism, that the fight for the adoption of the birth control bill by Congress will be persistently pursued.

The Legion of Decency has made a valiant and partly successful struggle to at least check the corruption of American youth by evil films. But apparently it has been so exclusively interested in the pictorial representation of evil that it has quite neglected to observe the rise and development of this newest of big business enterprises: the mass-production of contraceptives, and their sales-promotion among our boys and girls, pushed so vigorously by the press in its advertising pages.

Now, there may be—in fact, I believe that there are—men and women, including clergymen (who still call themselves, and indeed consider themselves to be Christians), who in good faith (however mistakenly, however much they are deceived by a false and pernicious pagan philosophy) really hold that birth control as practised by married couples (for economic or hygienic reasons) is not merely permissible, morally speaking, but often may be a social duty, a social benefit. Very well! For the sake of the argument involved let us grant their right to hold such a position, and their consequent right (in a free, democratic society) to promulgate it, and to claim the right to have their view made legal. But are these honest upholders of birth control really committed to the further claim implicitly if not explicity underlying the whole birth control movement—namely, that not only is contraceptive knowledge and technique a good and even desirable thing for married people, for sociological as well as personal reasons, but also that contraceptive information and devices should be made

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universally available for, and sedulously promoted among, our boys and girls?

That is precisely what is going on throughout the country. Talk confidentially with any high school principal, man or woman, who really is aware of what is happening in our high schools and colleges. Talk with any observant police official, with any wide-awake doctor. Then ask Mrs. McGoldrick to let you see her documentary evidence. I mean, ask these people to tell you the facts—probably you already know them in a general way—and then ask yourself this question, which, it seems to me, goes to the very roots of the supreme problem of this age of social crisis: "Has Christian civilization been utterly corrupted, or has it still sufficient vitality to reorganize its dismayed and disunited forces, and cast out of its social body the corrupting poison of paganism?"

I put the question because with all the sincerity of which I am capable (whatever its degree may be), I do believe that it requires to be met. It is for others to answer it. The new pagans are sure that they know the answer. They unquestioningly agree with Lenin that religion—any sort of religion—is the opium of the people. Many of them agree with Lenin on merely ecenomic grounds; but even when they are not Communists they still hold that religion—in particular, Christianity, and more especially, the Catholic Church—is a poison which sickens humanity, and dulls its art and letters, and depresses its joy in life. And it would seem—but I hope it is not really the case—that the secular press, in spite of occasional editorial utterances paying lip service to the truths and traditions of Christendom, is for the most part a hired instrument (consciously, sometimes, but perhaps mostly unconsciously) for the propagation of paganism.

Is it still possible for the practical (not merely superficial Christians, and those Jews who yet are faithful to the religion of Israel, to agree, in this hour of the change in the tide of time—this hour when, if religious men and women so decide, an act of will may still determine the inner (and, therefore, ultimately, the exterior) nature and character of the new age the world is moving toward—I say, is there yet time for such men and women to come together and form a common front to oppose the pagans who have passed our gates, and fight together to recapture the citadel of civilization?

I began these remarks by referring to the gross and odious commercialization of murder, as exemplified by the treatment by the press of the Hauptmann case. I proceeded to point out the commercialization by the press of the sordid traffic of the salesmen of Sodom and Gomorrah who have appeared within the walls of Christian society. There is a vital connection between these two aspects of my subject. "Murder will out," says one of the oldest proverbs of Christendom. No doubt it is true: murder will out, and justice will finally be done, in eternity if not in time. And murder will also shout: it will cry out from the earth louder even than the clamor of the press, and it will be heard by Christians, even if all the rest of the world denies the truth that every act of the birth control practises promoted by profiteers in vice, and abetted by the press which accepts their filthy advertisement money, is also a murder, or akin to murder, because it destroys and spills and wastes the seeds of life, which at least potentially are the vehicles for the souls of human beings.

But what do these merchants of murder care? They do not believe—as Christians believe—that a time will come when "the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn . . . for no man shall buy their merchandise any more. Merchandise of gold and silver, and precious stones . . . and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet . . . and odors, and ointment . . . *and slaves and souls of men.*"

And Day Is Done

Ah, lad, how vividly I recall the dawn;
The lark on the gate, the lamb on the dewy lawn.
The querulous rill, the tinkling bells on the lea,
And the sun a great bubble hung in the sweet-gum tree.

But the bubble slipped up through the maze of the leaves,
And I shaded my eyes with the blue of my sleeves.
And I stalked to the uplands and cut off the corn
And I plowed a good field at the curve of the morn.
Then I whistled my hound and I blew on my horn.
So into the forest. . . . I jumped the wild deer;
He broke through the brush and his hoofs clipped the thorn.
I dropped to one knee and I leveled my gun;
But I froze at the trigger though ever so clear
Was the range. For what hunter has seen a dead deer
As gorgeous a thing as a deer on the run?

But I wandered far off at the height of the day,
And I built me a house on the stones of the quay.
And I traded with men and I trafficked in ships;
Some of them sailed home—the most sailed away.
And then came my Mary, my love and my rose;
But too like the flower, she shrank in the snows.
The sun moved down toward the mottled sea wall,
And you grew up strong, lad, and handsome and tall.

Ah, lad, how graphic! It seemed but the turn of a day.
The sun is at setting now; soon it will sink in the bay.
The morning was short and the noon, and now comes the dark. . . .
The old gate is rusted and broken; gone is the lark.
This hour I saw the geese in southerly flight.
Come, lad, it is dark. Let me touch you and bless you—
Goodnight!

LeGarde S. Doughty.

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TWO ART EXHIBITIONS

ALBRIZIO'S STATIONS

THE INCREASING influence of the Liturgical Arts Society, and the well-sustained quality of *Liturgical Arts*, its quarterly publication, have implications more important even than those which relate to the enterprise, taste and wisdom of the officers of that society. These qualities have assisted the society in inaugurating and sustaining its struggle for artistic reform. The broad significance of the movement, however, lies in the response and support the society has received, which indicates a widespread interest in art, as related to religion, arising from a new consciousness of its significance and value.

To be sure, it must sometimes occur to the members of the society to look with dismay on the too frequently recurring dossal, tester and riddels, a scheme of altar treatment which seems to be identified with the essentials of the liturgy in the minds of many adherents to this movement. However it is to be hoped that this type of superficial estheticism will pass and more enduring and creative results appear to support the spirit of the movement, a spirit which the society's sponsors have always striven to foster.

In its recently concluded exhibition of Way of the Cross Stations at the Catholic Centre Club, the society has justified the hope of its friends that this movement would draw to it, not only the clergy, whose consciousness of art had been aroused, but also artists of a creative type who would find, in the purpose to serve religion, a stimulus to their latent ability for the creation of religious art. The exhibition displayed the work of Mr. Conrad Albrizio, a painter new in this field of work. The Stations, executed in tempera and gold on gesso, are for the Church of St. Cecelia in Detroit. This artist's previous work, such as his frescoes in the State Capitol of Louisiana, was of a secular character. Perhaps the fresh approach, resulting from work in a different field, contributed to the freeing of these Stations from the more obvious clichés, the formalized arrangements that are a usual thing in work for the Church. The resulting freshness of pattern, in color and massing, and the continuity of indicated movement, connecting the Stations to one another make them a welcome departure from what the writer has seen of similar efforts in this country.

In considering the matter of art that is religious in intention, it is to be remembered that one of the deterring elements in its production is its overwhelming past. The artist is usually at a loss as to ways of freeing himself sufficiently from that past, which, if it does not destroy his creative effort, at the very least limits it to an inhibiting degree. He must free himself, however, if his work is to be more than a re-use of plastic material, which, like words overused, has become too tired. If art is to move the spectator's sensibilities, it must be freshly conceived and imbued with the qualities that are innate in the artist. It is these qualities which give to a work of art its content, as distinguished from its subject-matter, a content which, issuing into the plasticities of form and color, vitalizes the subject-matter and in the higher manifestations of art produces significant work.

Mr. Albrizio has achieved somewhat of this detachment in the Stations. To say that the achievement is complete would show a lack of appreciation of the potentialities of this painter. His future as a creative artist in the field of religious painting has the possibility of being distinguished, providing he has the encouragement of commissions and an understanding sympathy for his artistic direction and efforts. It is indicative of his capacity for development, that of the fourteen episodes the latter ones, representing later painting, show greater freedom and control, and are more complete expressions of the subject-matter and of the artist's plastic ideas. As we are entering a new artistic epoch, the potentiality of an artist is of primary interest in any critical estimate of his art. This coming epoch promises to be a period of new forms in all of the arts. Art possessing both religious and artistic authenticity, and a newer mode of handling, such as these Stations, is to be viewed with special interest and appreciation therefore, as transitional work leading toward a more engaging and alive future.

While Mr. Albrizio has freed himself from many of the restrictions of formalized religious art, he succumbed to one which, the writer believes, he could well have avoided. The use of a gold background, such as is employed on these Stations, is too sure-fire, too sweet an expedient, for the reality of art, of which this painter shows an active sense. It is related to that fallacious idea, current in Church circles, that material of a so-called precious nature contributes to the glory of an artistic result. In reality, material, be it base or precious, is a thing apart. The glory of an art work is an inner suffusion which is of the artists' spirit. Such an inner quality which is the content of the art work, is lessened, rather than augmented, by the use of a material which savors of that specious glory which is not of the spirit but is rather too definitely of the world.

The individual Stations of this series are not separate conceptions; they are details of a total

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conception, which is as it should be. The flow and play of form and color throughout the series, and its unification into a schematic total, indicates an unusual ability. While the debt is no more than is common in the case of a younger artist seeking his own direction, the influence of certain other painters may be found in this work. This is not to be regretted because, esthetically considered, the influence to which a response is shown is healthful and, in general, is artistically authentic. It is one from which this painter may be expected to emerge into a fuller and more subjectivized art, which, as it detaches itself from the realm of studio performances, will even more completely find its place and relationship within the church structure.

BARRY BYRNE.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

CÉZANNE had once said, "I want to make of Impressionism something solid and enduring, like the art of the museums." With the recent exhibit that closed a period of five years that have long ceased to be probational, the Museum of Modern Art justified not only Cézanne's extraordinary vision but its own. Out of the tangle of contemporary cross-purposes and contradictory methods the enduring is bound to emerge eventually. To mark this last anniversary the museum had selected not everything that proves such inevitability but enough in order to do so.

Cézanne himself was adequately represented with works that cover a period from 1865 to 1900. "The Man in a Blue Cap" is a classic belonging to a period before Cézanne ventured into the methods of the Impressionists. It is vehement with the directness of the Realists of the sixties, Courbet and Daumier. By means of a palate knife he has applied color with sculptural clarity. Under the influence of Pisarro about 1872 he was to experiment with lights and prove scientifically that nature is undimmed by darks. The "Portrait of Choquet," his first patron, of which a certain illumination shows the evolution through at least five impressionistic years, is, however, a return to the straightforward monumentality of "The Man in a Blue Cap." His interest has returned to structure in this and in still lifes like that of 1891-1893 from the Bliss Collection and the water color, 1895, lent by Mr. and Mrs. Samuel A. Lewisohn.

The other pioneers of the modern production were present: Gauguin with the familiar "We Greet You, Mary" among others, Van Gogh with the splendid "Arlésienne" from the Adolph Lewisohn collection and the "Café at Night" of 1888-1889, Seurat in particular with "Sideshow" ("La Parade") of 1889, and Toulouse-Lautrec with "May Belfort in Pink" of 1895. "La Parade" was entirely pleasing. Seurat was not prolific but he challenged attention by his consistent and imperturbable breaking up of color into spots arranged with impeccable order. In the study of "La Grande Jatte" from the Adolph Lewisohn collection though less perhaps than in the large final painting at the Chicago Art Institute, and certainly in "La Parade," one forgot the immediate challenge of unusual technique and enjoyed the subtle composition of lines as solemn as the progress of a freize.

The famous "White Plumes" of Matisse, the piquantly moving "Dog on Leash" of Giacomo Balla, the engaging water color "I and the Village" by Chagall, the great and robust abstraction "The Three Musicians," 1921, by Picasso, a cool, ordered abstraction by Braque, 1914, a luminous design of four colors and as many lines by Mondrian, 1933, fervid canvases by the Mexican trio, Orosco, Rivera and Siqueiros, were but some of the examples covering the results evolved from Japanese print influence, Italian Futurism, Dada and Surrealism, Cubism, neo-Plasticism and Mexican mural painting. The selection of Americans was significant. Burchfield and Hopper were present with houses. Viewed together, Grant Wood with "Daughters of Revolution," Weber with "Talmudists," 1934, Sheeler with the tight well-arranged horizontals of an industrial landscape, Kuhn with "Apples and Pineapple," 1933, Demuth with "Eggplant and Tomatoes," 1926, Peter Blume with the same tightly handled and boldly conceived Surrealism in "Parade" as in "South of Scranton," much challenged at the last Carnegie International, suggested that contemporary American painting has left the influence of European departures from tradition for the revaluation of subject-matter and resemblance to nature.

The exhibit of sculpture was smaller. Brancusi's "Bird in Space," once famous cause of a lawsuit with United States Customs from which it emerged bereft of its claim of being a work of art, topped the permanent collection with an élan as breathless as that of a Gothic arch. Kolbe and Lehmbruck, both Germans, were notable. Arp had a relief in painted wood, Pevsner a torso in celluloid and copper, Archipenko a metal lady in relief. The latter are not sculpture perhaps but constructions. And what was the Calder mobile humming off in the corner while two small balls quietly worked at ascending and descending wire and string on a twist of pipe? If one had lingered in front of the Calder, it might have been that it took the white ball just so long to reach the top of the pipe, but the fact remains that the laughter evoked was more akin to delight than to derision. And may it be a last comment on the entire exhibit.

MARIE ZOE MERCIER.

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NEW SOCIAL FRONTIERS[1]

By JOHANNES MATTERN

SO the assumption by the government of so-called private interest activities and, more recently, the New Deal, are nothing new. All began potentially with the Declaration of Independence, the formation of the Union, and actually with the establishment of the Constitution. The colonies asserted their political and social interests on the basis of territorial and interest groups. They formed a government considered suitable for the service of these interests. They limited the functions of the government to those of keeping peace and order and a few other activities which the regional and private interest groups were considered incapable of performing for the maintenance of the social order. But the social order changed, the interest groups became many, their relation one of competition and conflict. The assumption that the interest groups would conduct their private group-affairs in a manner preserving a balance of interests in the social order was not borne out by the facts. Furthermore, government, constituted by men drawn from the interest groups, was inevitably drawn into the vortex of that competition and conflict. If one election brought in a preponderance of officials from one interest group, or set of groups, a later election would bring in another group. Whichever group was in control would use or abuse the action, control, and power prestige of the government to support its own interest group or to hinder the opposition. The result was the gradual building up of a system of government activities of the kind which might well be carried on by the private interest groups. This development was analogous to the establishing of post offices and post roads, and the regulating of commerce with foreign nations and among the several states, as proper government functions recognized in Article I, Section 8, of the American Constitution. It was not the product of old or new theories—it was the result of the need for action in the face of emergencies as and when they became urgent, and it took place in defiance of the hoary theory that the best government is the one which keeps out of the private affairs of the interest groups of society. The New Deal is the latest link in this development, which has grown in the ascending order, from the giving of advice and assistance, to enforcing regulation, undertaking the management of this or that public utility and, finally, the broad attempt to coordinate more or less all business enterprises with a view to balancing the conflicting interests of the existing social order.

This development from the lowest rung of the ladder, guidance and assistance, to the higher, enforced coordination by the New Deal and socialization of key industries, is the alternative to the failure of the private interest groups to conduct their affairs so as to render unnecessary the absorption by the government of functions normally of the character of private group activities. This failure on the part of the private interest groups is the result of the fact that the private interest groups are guided in their action by motives and notions which are dictated by self-interest rather than reason, ethical principles, or just plain common-sense intelligence.

Thus we must accept the ever-increasing development of governmental activity beyond the function of mere peace and order keeping as a factual necessity. We must accept it as such because no thinking in old-time conceptions, no alleged limitations of constitutional provisions, no orderly social or political opposition have so far been able to prevent it. Wherever the forces of the opposition have succeeded in checking or reversing the trend of this development, the result has been sooner or later a revolutionary and not an evolutionary readjustment of the social and political order. This has been the case in Russia, in Italy and in Germany. Such revolutionary adjustment by one interest group or another has been justified on the ground that the rest of the groups have not shown sufficient intelligence and good-will to permit the process of evolution to take care of the needs of society.

Resort to or reliance upon the evolutionary development constitutes what Secretary Wallace calls the New Frontiers; it constitutes new frontiers in deed, in action. But new frontiers in deed can have the right significance only if we bring our patterns of thinking into harmony with the facts, so as to enable us to understand the objective and procedure of the development. We need new frontiers in thought not only to comprehend but also to give a reasonable content and fruitful direction to the new frontiers in deed, to furnish intelligent guidance for and control over this development. There are those among us who persist in the old line of thinking about the State as an abstraction apart and above the realities of social life, of the individual as deciding the course of social action, of *laissez-faire* as the rule determining the activity of government. What the ultimate fate of the social

[1] This is the second and concluding instalment of this article.

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order will be if their mode of thinking should lead to a determined attempt to check the evolutionary development of remedial measures, no one can foretell. We can only judge by analogy with Russia, Italy and Germany. How far in the direction of the ascending scale this evolutionary development will have to go in this country, or how far this development can safely be allowed to slow down or to recede, no one can foretell. All depends upon the success or failure of the private interest groups in reshaping their conduct of affairs in the interest of the whole. In other words, the factor determining the speed and extent of the development of new frontiers in deed depends upon the future attitude and activity of the private interest groups concerned. This is the choice which Secretary Wallace asserts America must make, and which he fears America is not yet ready to make. It is not a choice between letting the social order go to ruin by the method of *laissez-faire,* or of bringing it to perfection by the partial or complete absorption of private enterprise by the government. It is a choice of the private interest groups to conduct their interest affairs with a practical responsibility to the rest of the interest groups, or to refuse to conduct their affairs in such a fashion and to let the evolutionary development of the new frontiers in deed take its course. In the case of the second choice the limits of this development would be determined by the exigencies of the hour as interpreted by the government as the agency ready to relieve the private interests of a responsibility which they have failed to meet and which it, the government, then assumes to meet for them.

But here we are catching ourselves in thinking once more in patterns of the past. Falling back into ancient conceptions, we have been assuming government to be a superior, unbiased, impartial agency capable and ready to direct the coordination of private interest groups for the benefit of the social order, where the private interest groups have failed or refused to conduct their affairs to that effect. We have conceived the government as an abstraction apart from and above society, representing all the interest groups and coordinating all the interest groups to the satisfaction and in the interest of all. Let us correct this error.

Let us begin with society as constituted by a varying number of interest groups such as: political parties, politicians, business in its many conflicting aspects, labor in its many complexes, consumers, professions, churches, religious and political non-conformists, the masses as affiliated with several of the preceding groups and on occasion capable of dynamic concerted action, the subnormal and abnormal, the criminal, and many others. At one time or other one or several of these groups seeks or seek to assert its or their interests over the interests of the other groups. Government is constituted, at least in a democracy, from men and women drawn from the ranks of these private interest groups. The most effective way for an interest group to assert itself over the rest is to capture the government, to make use of the government for its purposes. That is precisely what happens in a democracy. One election brings in one interest group affiliated with interest groups of kindred purpose—another election brings in the opposition. Only in rare instances is the government constituted on a balanced basis of all the major interest groups. To be sure, idealists and theorists have racked their brains to invent a method by which a perfect balancing of the interest groups in the government could be brought about. Proportional representation was the device resorted to. Where it has been tried, it has resulted in a creeping paralysis of the government and the recapture of the government by one of the revolting interest groups, or it has been modified to forestall the inevitable result.

But can we expect a government, admittedly constituted by one or the other of the controlling interest groups, to conduct its affairs, especially the new frontiers affairs, in the interest of the social order as a whole, including the opposition? The answer depends on our faith or lack of faith in human nature, and upon the level or kind of intelligence of man as a member of an interest group. As to our faith or want of faith in human nature, we must realize by this time that election or appointment to the government does not change the nature of man as a member of one or the other of the interest groups of the social order. As a rule a Democrat remains a Democrat, a Republican a Republican, a member of a church a member of a church, a criminal a criminal. To be sure, there are exceptions: a Socialist sometimes turns conservative and a Communist turns Socialist. But let us accept the rule as the norm. Thus members of the government bring with them a certain complex of ideas, convictions, purposes, which are the result of their former affiliations and which in the last analysis may be defined in terms or degrees of intelligence, standards of ethics, capacity of common sense. The mere transfer of a man from private life to the government does not endow him with greater intelligence, higher morality, more common sense. The most we can say is that the increased responsibility and enlarged opportunity may render him either more cautious or more reckless in the use of his native faculties.

In other words, we cannot select for government higher caliber men and women than those available in society; which means that the question of leadership in government, as the agency charged with or assuming the coordination of the private interest groups, presumably in the interest

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of the whole social order, is essentially the same as that involved in the success or failure of the private interest groups to produce the kind of leadership which will render unnecessary or superfluous the absorption of their private activities by the government. The question is one of leadership in terms of intelligence or capacity, ethics, and common sense!

Those who accept this postulate as one of the corollaries of the new frontiers in deed and thought must, as a prerequisite, consign to the scrap heap of democratic shibboleths the traditional fear of leadership, a fear based on the notion that leadership is dangerous to democracy. What is dangerous to democracy is the lack, the absence, of leadership of the right kind.

Accepting then the quality and kind of leadership available, we can expect from those called to the government at best only a greater sense of responsibility induced by the realization that the failure of coordination of the conflicting interests by the private interest groups leaves the government as the agency of last resort for such coordination. It was in this realization that Friedrich Ebert, a leader of the German Socialist party, conducted himself as the President of the whole of Germany rather than as a leader of the Socialist party. It was in this realization that MacDonald risked expulsion from his party for the sake of conducting his office on a basis presumed to benefit the whole British social order, not a single interest group. Their degree of success or failure was and is of course determined by the cooperation or failure of cooperation by the rest of the government concerned.

The effective, peaceful, balancing of the conflicting interests of the private interest groups as far as possible, and the effective, peaceful balancing of those interests by the government if necessary, as applied to a democratic social and political order, can mean only one thing, as a program for the future: abandonment of the fear of leadership, and instead search for material showing capacity for leadership, abandonment of the educational levelling process, and instead definite training according to capacity, abandonment of the notion that every American native is a born candidate for the White House, and instead encouragement and training to suit ability; and as a program for the present: making the most of the best leadership available in the conduct of the affairs of the private interest groups and above all in conduct of the affairs of government.

To recapitulate and conclude, we must recast our conceptions of the institutions and institutional relations of the social and political order, i. e., of State, government, individual, and their relation to each other. In a realistic and reasonable pattern of thinking, the State is the social order, it is the social order organized for its own preservation. Government is the agency through which the social order acts for the preservation of peace and order and for the performance of all those activities which the private interest groups, constituting society, cannot perform or fail to perform so as to preserve a balance of the conflicting interests. Government, therefore, is not a source or manifestation of power or force, but an agency for service, which employs the measures of control and enforcement placed at its disposal by society. The individual, singly or as a member of the family, is the ultimate unit of the social order. In the last analysis, all action of society and of government affects the individual. In the policy-shaping activity of the private interest groups and of the government the individual is effective in two ways: through his attachment to the interest group and to government and through personal leadership in the interest groups and in government. In all activities of society and government the individual can expect consideration for his individual interests by private interest groups and by the government only to the extent to which he is willing to give consideration to the individual interests of his fellow citizen, be he partner or competitor. These are the ideas, the concepts, constituting the new frontiers in thought with which our democratic social and political order must advance to the new frontiers in deed if, as Secretary Wallace hopes, we wish to gain by the democratic method what other social orders seek to establish by dictatorship of one kind or another: security and commensurate living for all who are willing to pay the price, honest labor and an equally honest distribution of wealth.

The City That Knows No Sun

There is a city that through time shall lie
Under the stars. Deep is my heart's envy
For all those lost in thee this very hour,
O city without fragrance, without flower,
Estranged from every bird and butterfly.

Who walk these shaded streets? I know them well.
Those who come out of life's sequestered places:
The lonely, the unloved, the weak and shy,
The broken-winged who piteously would fly,
The poor who still have starlight in their faces.
Time's lamp burns sweet, but oh, what wonder stirs
Around these hungry homeless wanderers!

Aware of this I pray: O heaven, listen!
Make me as one of these. O mercy, hark!
Find me a hole of earth in which to hide,
Leaving time's crusts of pride and love outside.
Let me creep out most humbly in the dark
With these, God's own, the littlest and the least,
Who fast in preparation for a feast.

JESSICA POWERS.

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Seven Days' Survey

The Church.—En route to Rome from Melbourne, where he was Papal Legate to the Australian National Eucharistic Congress, Cardinal MacRory, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, visited Archbishop Hanna of San Francisco and Bishop Cantwell of Los Angeles. Cardinal MacRory is now bound for New York via the Panama Canal. * * * At a public hearing on employment policy conducted at Washington, January 31, by the National Recovery Board, Reverend Francis J. Haas, director of the National Catholic School of Social Service, declared that to maintain a decent standard of living all American workers must be assured of a yearly income of not less than $2,500. * * * *La Croix,* Catholic daily of Paris, reports the establishment of Rymofilm, Incorporated, of Warsaw, Poland, to produce films that are based on Christian ethics. Catholic Action is taking an active part in the making and distribution of "Prior Kordecki, Defender of Czetochowa," the first of the Rymofilm productions. * * * Following the address of Bishop Kucera of Lincoln, February 3, five other members of the American hierarchy will speak on the "Church of the Air" program of the Columbia Broadcasting System. These Sunday talks, which take place at 1 p. m., Eastern Standard Time, and are carried over sixty-six stations, are the following: "The Papacy," by Bishop McNamara of Baltimore, February 10; "The Church and Peace," by Archbishop Beckman of Dubuque, February 24; Bishop Griffin of Springfield, Illinois, March 10; Archbishop Glennon of St. Louis, March 17; "The Structure of the Catholic Church," by Bishop Rohlman of Davenport, April 17. * * * Monsignor Roland-Gosselin, Bishop of Versailles, has founded a society with headquarters at Le Bourget, whose members say one Hail Mary each day for airmen, living and dead, with the invocation "Our Lady of the Air, watch over our airmen." * * * The Catholic population of the Japanese Empire is 250,747; through a slow but steady growth Catholics in Japan proper now number 103,271.* * * The *Catholic Herald* reports that prayers have been asked for the repose of the soul of Cardinal Bourne in Anglican churches in many English towns and villages.

The Nation.—Some inkling of the unemployment relief problem, which is still the single greatest menace to the stability and improvement of the living conditions of the national family, was afforded by the announcement of Mr. William Hodson, New York City Commissioner of the Department of Public Welfare and chairman of the Emergency Relief Bureau, that the city was shouldering the heaviest relief load since the depression began. The net increase in families on home relief he put at 20,000 since October 1 last, bringing the total to 220,000 families. The number of families receiving work relief is now 115,000, representing a net decline of 2,000 in the last three months. * * * An American Federation of Labor national survey showed 11,329,000 workers now unemployed, a decrease of 71,000 in unemployment during November and December and a 4 percent increase in the total number of persons on relief. Trade union reports indicated that the improvement in employment was continuing in the first months of this year. * * * The United Fruit Company reported a 1934 net income of $12,049,299, compared with a net of $9,240,941 in 1933, or an earning of $4.11 a share on common the past year as compared with $3.15 the year previous. * * * Bethlehem Steel Corporation reported a net income of $550,571 last year compared with a deficit of $8,735,723 in 1933. * * * The House Judiciary Committee by a vote of 15 to 8 adversely reported the Pierce bill for legalization of birth control information and devices. The Associated Press announced the vote in one paragraph and followed with four paragraphs verbatim of propaganda by Mrs. Margaret Sanger. * * * In the field of government activities, the news was largely of events in abeyance, beyond the closing of Soviet debt and credit negotiations and the President's controversy with the American Federation of Labor, both reported elsewhere. Administration plans for greatly increasing the powers of the Federal Reserve Board were intimated, and the Supreme Court decision on the abrogation of the gold clause of bonds was still being anxiously awaited at this writing.

The Wide World.—After conferences in London, British and French statesmen issued a communiqué which underscored the value and importance of the League of Nations, expressed the hope that Germany would again become a member of this body, promised to work for "agreements regarding armaments generally, which, in the case of Germany, would replace the provisions of part of the Treaty of Versailles," and proposed doing something about aerial warfare. A five-power pact will be submitted to various governments for consideration. The nations signing would promise to give "the assistance of their air forces to whichever of them might be the victim of unprovoked aerial aggression by one of the contracting parties." Frankly drawn up to allay fears that a rearmed Germany is preparing to swoop down upon the world when the proper moment comes, the proposal was up to Germany. Early reports indicated that the Hitler government would request time to consider the various aspects of the proposed pact, but had avoided an open expression of hostility. The comment in Italy was friendly but guarded. Meanwhile London informed all governments that if Hitler did not accept, defensive air alliances with other countries would isolate Germany. * * * A bevy of riots were sighted in France. Parisian students demonstrated against Americans in pursuit of learning, and asked for sterner laws against foreign professional men. From the neighborhood of Lille came reports of serious clashes between the police and striking

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workers in the steel industry. * * * A provisional trade agreement, covering various financial and tariff problems, was signed by President Roosevelt prior to its submission to the Brazilian Congress. If all goes well, commercial relations with this South American nation should be considerably improved within thirty days. * * * Rumors of impending revolution in Mexico were widespread as the echos of Senator Borah's castigation of religious repression died away. It was stated that General A. I. Villereal, veteran revolutionist, was active and was supplied with both money and arms.

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Decentralization.—The Business Advisory and Planning Council of the Commerce Department has recommended the establishment of a federal department to select rural towns requiring industrial payrolls to reduce unemployment relief, to select proper, seasonal industries to fit the towns, and to finance (at first with a $2,500,000 revolving fund) the transference of the chosen industries to the new rustic setting. "We find that the population is now being and should be further decentralized, but that industry is not being decentralized to keep pace with the population and there is no cash income provided for these rural communities except government relief money. There is a type of industry which by reason of its seasonal production cannot furnish steady employment to its workers. Such an industry is a liability to a congested area as it upsets the labor market during its peak periods and creates unemployment during its slack seasons." This analysis and recommendation, attractive at its face value, immediately aroused the wrath of various workingmen's organizations. It was seen as a threat to labor solidarity and unionization, since the proletariat would be scattered in small groups and would be deprived of the close contact they can maintain in cities. It would also tend to give the employees in the decentralized factories an equivocal class position, partly wage earner, and partly, perhaps, farmer. It would make even more difficult the lot of the laborers who are still in the cities. Finally, it would reduce the responsibility of manufacturing to support properly its own and of agriculture to provide a proper cash income to agricultural workers.

Toward Social Security.—While the House has been preparing to act on the administration's social security bill within the next week, the states, too, have been busy with plans for social legislation. Thirty-three governors have officially recommended legislation dealing with these problems and forty-three state legislatures were considering over 300 bills to provide old age pensions and unemployment and health insurance. A nation-wide program of federal-state cooperation seems to be in prospect. *Social Security,* the official organ of the American Association for Social Security, declares that "President Roosevelt [in his message to Congress] on January 17 officially closed the era of rugged individualism and opened to America the vision of social security." As we go to press it is announced that England's new dole system, which was outlined in our January 18 issue, has already proved unequal to providing adequately for unemployed workers who are not entitled to unemployment insurance payments. Major Oliver Stanley, British Minister of Labor, who announced this failure in the House of Commons, is quoted in the New York *Times* as follows: "We are dealing not merely with business or finance or intangible things, but with men and women. Where we find hardship we do not propose to continue it until we can go through the long legislative process of revising the law. It will be immediate, and the agents of the Unemployment Assistance Board have already been instructed to disregard the regulations in all cases in which enforcement would mean further injustice."

Where the Children Are.—Believing that education is a serious enterprise, which even last year cost the nation more than $66 per child, the editors of the *Architectural Forum* have devoted their January, 1935, issue to the question of school building. First comes a careful survey of existing achievements and failures in the United States. Too much economy in child training is roundly trounced, but at the same time it is pointed out that the way to get a decent building does not lead through the unassisted—and sometimes unfurbished—heads of the gentry of the local school board. The effort requires professional intelligence. Therefore the *Forum* invited several well-known architects—Messrs. Neutra, Lescaze, Harrison and Barney—to submit designs of the modern school that ought to exist. One mere glance at the drawings will convince grandmother that education is not what it used to be. As a matter of fact, Harrison's conception of a "community high school" is a little terrifying. Those indigenous to almost any town we know would hardly be the same people again if such a structure were suddenly wished on them, anticipatory as it is of the year 3000. Especially interesting is the "typical class room" designed by Mr. Barney. Here the indoor and outdoor instruction spaces merge. The seats, movable as chairs, are arranged in convex rows leading from a corner, so that the maximum amount of light is supplied at a minimum sacrifice of space. Miss Teacher becomes almost automatically the point at which attention focuses, and all the addenda to a successful year are tucked away with the greatest skill. We think this issue of the *Forum* will interest almost every parent, teacher and authority.

Catholic Action Medal.—St. Bonaventure's College honored the editor of THE COMMONWEAL, Mr. Michael Williams, by conferring on him the "Catholic Action Medal" at a dinner in New York City on the evening of February 3. A distinguished group of the clergy and the laity were present, and listened to addresses by the Most Reverend Maurice F. McAuliffe, Bishop of Hartford, the Very Reverend Thomas Plassmann, O. F. M., president of St. Bonaventure's, Mr. Williams and others. A more detailed account of the proceedings will appear in next week's issue. Last year the medal was conferred upon the Honorable Alfred E. Smith. It is designed to recognize leaders in the effort to which the reigning Sovereign Pontiff has given the name Catholic Action, and

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to encourage others by example and appreciation. St. Bonaventure's is a Franciscan college for men which can look back on many years of earnest educational endeavor. The award of the medal synchronizes with a convocation of college alumni to reflection on how the good of the individual and of society can best be promoted. Among those who attended the dinner were Monsignor Michael J. Lavelle, the Reverend John Forest, Dr. James J. Walsh, Dr. Robert Ashworth and Mr. Robert J. Cuddihy.

More Good-will.—On February 24, the National Conference of Jews and Christians will again observe "Brotherhood Day" as its annual tribute to the work for toleration already accomplished. The success such an occasion can have depends far more on the diligence and effectiveness of local committees than upon nation-wide ceremonial, say the sponsors. "Each local observance of Brotherhood Day should be planned to suit local conditions. Rely upon educational approaches. Emphasis should be placed on human relations and united work as citizens, not on religious systems. Brotherhood Day does not deal with doctrinal differences, it does not promote worship in common, and it does not seek to water down anyone's religious convictions"—so reads a digest of the rules. Additional information and literature can he secured by addressing the conference at 289 Fourth Avenue, New York. One pamphlet quotes the following by Pope Pius XI: "Errors, misunderstandings, which persist and are repeated against the Catholic Church . . . seem incredible. But Catholics also sometimes lack a just appreciation of their brethren: they lack fraternal charity, because they lack acquaintance with these groups. One does not know all that there is of the precious, of the good, of Christianity, in these fragments of ancient Catholic truth." The National Conference, which has sponsored appeals to clergy of all denominations for support in protesting against religious or group prejudices in Mexico and Germany, justly sees its chief field in the United States.

The Field of Catholic Action.—The Most Reverend G. Pizzardo, spiritual director of Catholic Action in Italy, is publishing a series of articles in the monthly magazine of the National Catholic Welfare Conference. In the February issue he attempts to clarify the relationship between Catholic Action proper and the organizations which "cannot in strict accuracy be called Catholic Action, although they are real and providential auxiliaries of it." The particular field referred to is the socio-economic. "These activities, inasmuch as they are concerned with material objectives and hence with politics and civil legislation, belong only indirectly to the Church, hence only indirectly to Catholic Action." Pope Pius in 1929 wrote to a Spanish cardinal, "While conforming their activity to the religious and moral program of Catholic Action, and exercising their activity directly in the economic and professional field, these associations, in all that concerns economic interests, have the responsibility for their undertakings and their acts; whereas in all that concerns religion and morals they are dependent upon Catholic Action." Bishop Pizzardo states that "while co-operating with lawful political parties they should keep themselves, as organizations, entirely independent of them, not only because these parties are foreign to Catholic Action, but in order not to be entangled in their inevitable difficulties." The field in which the article suggests these socio-economic auxiliaries should theoretically accept responsibility is thus most subtly cut off on one side by Caesar, and on the other by hierarchical Catholic Action. In the following instalment a detailed treatment of the relationship between Catholic Action and politics and political parties is promised.

Russian Affairs.—The proposals for business with Soviet Russia on the basis of our exporting great quantities of real goods that Russia wants and receiving payment for them out of our own pockets through the extension of credits to cover the exports, finally collapsed after fourteen months of negotiation. After a four-minute interview with the Soviet Ambassador at which Mr. Troyanovsky declared that he had no authority to suggest a possible solution for the impasse in negotiations for the settlement of Russia's debt to the United States, Secretary of State Hull announced that the negotiaions might be considered terminated and that the Export-Import Bank which had been created with the idea of extending credits to Russia if the debt could be liquidated had no longer any reason for existing. The debt involved $187,000,000 loaned to the Kerensky régime without interest (or what is commonly known as thrown out the window), and the claims of American citizens and firms for property damaged during the revolution or confiscated by the Bolshevik government, amounting to around $700,000,000 without accrued interest. The United States had indicated a willingness to scale the total of the above two amounts down to a lump settlement of approximately $150,000,000. Ambassador Troyanovsky had offered to settle for $100,000,000 in twenty years, on condition that the United States would loan Russia twice that amount immediately. The facts of this financial juggling were buried in most of the American press under propaganda in favor of the deal apparently swallowed whole and the wisdom of the American negotiators was severely criticized. On the day preceding breakdown of negotiations the Soviet government had announced the increase of its army from 562,000 men in 1932 to 940,000 in 1934, and that the 1934 war budget of 1,665,000,000 rubles had been exceeded by a total expenditure of 5,000,000,000 rubles and that the military expenditures this year would be 6,500,000,000 rubles. Later Secretary Hull announced the withdrawal of the Consul General at Moscow, the acting naval and air attachés and others in the personnel of the embassy, and the cessation of plans to construct a million-dollar embassy building in Moscow. Ambassador Bullitt, however, will return to Moscow.

Dr. Townsend in Washington.—On February 1, while the administration was coming out against any excessive cost or "liberalization" of the old-age security program, Dr. Townsend appeared before the House Ways

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and Means Committee. He refused cross-examination because of ill-health, but corroborated the impression of the Townsend plan as supplying a $200 a month pension to all persons over sixty-five (when questioners would say "sixty" he did not correct them), paid for by a sales tax on business turnover (which is distinguished from total sales by some advocates in a way that confuses financial reporters). Labor scarcity and corporation prosperity were promised. Before going back to Johns Hopkins Hospital Dr. Townsend said: "Surely a plan which has aroused the intense interest of 10,000,000 old people in the country—and their relatives—cannot be dismissed by the mere characterization of it as 'cock-eyed' [quoting from Relief Administrator Hopkins]." On February 4, House leaders were planning a gag rule to get the security measures through without too much trouble from the Townsendites and at the same time Dr. Townsend was being cross-examined, amidst mirth, in the caucus room. He claimed the support of 20,000,000 Americans, and finally he said: "This is the last Congress of the United States that is going to uphold our old economic system or seek to solve the nation's ills through the application of outworn economic theory. . . . Who are the economists anyway? Economists can only base their conclusions on precedents and this is a new age with unprecedented conditions which require experimentation. . . . I hope there will be no violent turnover of American institutions to bring an end of existing conditions. But if we let things go as in the past five years, we won't be able to salvage the things we hold dear."

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Roosevelt and the A. F. of L.—On January 31 President Roosevelt extended the Automobile Code from February 1 to June 16. As extended, the code is the same, except the Labor Board is made an organic part of it, the introduction of models is put ahead to October from January, and time and a half is granted to work over forty-eight hours a week. The extension was greeted by a violent attack from the conservative A. F. of L. The Executive Council charged that it was imposed paternalistically upon labor with no open hearing, that a majority opinion of the NIRB was disregarded, and that the hated Wolman Auto Labor Board was perpetuated against every wish of labor. The Executive Council said: "Its members see in the extension of the Auto Code with all its objectionable features the hostile influence of Mr. Richberg and Dr. Wolman to the A. F. of L." Mr. Richberg replied by saying that he would not submit to the dictatorship of a particular faction of labor and he pointed out that the auto election being held in Detroit shows the A. F. of L. getting only 2,253 votes out of 46,211. This election is officially sabotaged by the A. F. of L. and other independent unions. The A. F. of L. claimed that "in tearing the mask of hypocrisy from Richberg, labor is not attacking the President. It is merely revealing to the President the unworthy liaison of a trusted servant." But on February 5, President Roosevelt finally grasped the responsibility and published correspondence with Charlton Ogburn, counsel for the A. F. of L. The correspondence revealed that the unions consider the Auto Labor Board an arbitrational committee which passed out of existence when labor withdrew its support, while Roosevelt claims it is a government board under his own authority. The underlying controversy also is clearly revealed; that is, shall the representative of the majority of the workers have sole right of dealing with the owners or shall there be proportional representation? This, of course, on top of the economic basis of the auto industry.

Cost of Living.—The latest reports from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, covering the six months between June and November, 1934, showed a continued increase in the cost of living. For the nation as a whole, food costs rose 5.8 percent; fuel and light bills increased 1.3 percent and the cost of house furnishings rose 1 percent. Clothing costs, the only decrease, were down about one-tenth of 1 percent. An earlier Federal Reserve report has indicated that rents were about the same in 1934 as in 1933. A consolidated index of the rising tide of taxes, a generally unreported item of the cost of living, would no doubt show the most marked upward increase was in this bracket. The Labor Bureau's statistics showed that increases in food prices were "spotty," ranging all the way from a jump of 13 percent in Los Angeles to 1 percent in Philadelphia and Detroit, and a decrease of 1 percent in Indianapolis, the only large center reporting a decrease. Compared with 1928, living costs were still much lower: 25.7 percent less for food, 16.5 percent less for house furnishings and 12.3 percent for fuel and light.

More Power.—A general consensus of informed opinion that the development of flying that has been attained is only a makeshift compared to what may be expected with the discovery of a new principle for motive power, gives interest to the announcement of successful tests near New York of a radically new type of airplane motor. The noise alone of the airplane motors which have been in use is an objectionable feature. The new motor is almost silent. The noise of our present combustion motor, moreover, is indicative of the violent dynamic principle on which it works. The translation of explosions into the rotation of the propeller at a rate around 2,000 a minute, or over 300 a second, obviously involves terrific stresses and friction. The weight of metal to control these forces has necessarily been large, though pared down to the minimum required for even approximate safety. The new motor, however, in the 100 horsepower class, with complete liquid cooling system, weighs only 1.3 pounds per horsepower. It can be operated on alcohol, gasoline or light fuel oil and, under test, fuel consumption as low as 0.5 pounds per brake horsepower has been indicated. The engine is of six-cylinder, two-stroke, opposed cylinder type. It does not have poppet valves, and by means of by-pass chambers uses its own exhaust pressure for a secondary stage of supercharging. It is this use of its own exhaust that makes the engine so quiet that when running it could not be heard a hundred feet away.

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The Play

By GRENVILLE VERNON

Fly Away Home

THE GENERAL idea and the first act of "Fly Away Home" are very good indeed; the last two acts are less satisfying, chiefly because the authors, Dorothy Bennett and Irving White, haven't made the most of their opportunities. Yet the lines, despite a few rather gratuitous callings of a spade a shovel, are often amusing and sometimes more than that. The idea of the play is sound.

James and Nan Masters have been separated for many years, and in the interval their children have grown up, the youngest being fifteen. James hasn't seen them since they were young children, and their mother has let them come under the influence of a liberal professor of anthropology, Armand Sloan, who is a believer in having children express themselves. He has talked to them all the jargon about personal freedom and sex and sex tabus, affected by many professors of his ilk, with the result that the Masters youngsters have no manners, no reticence, and have general mental indigestion. They are fortunately, however, sound at bottom. They are interested on meeting their father, but proceed to put him in his place, or at least try to. James, who has a sense of humor, takes it all philosophically, even when his former wife introduces him to Sloan, whom she is about to marry.

The rest of the play tells the story of how Masters brings his children back to normal ideas, and how he gets back his wife from the professor. If the authors had brought in Nan Masters earlier, there would have been greater opportunity of drama, as her relations to Sloan are only sketched. Sloan in the first act promised to be a really interesting figure, but he fades later into a mere set-up, with the result that Masters's victory comes too easily. But the play, despite the sometimes exaggerated frankness of the dialogue, is at least on the side of the angels.

The acting is admirable. Thomas Mitchell's James Masters is an admirably constructed bit of characterization, and Albert Van Dekker is excellent as Sloan, so excellent in the first act that one wishes the authors had given him at least as good a chance later on. Ann Mason does the best she can with Nan Masters, an indefinite, even incomprehensible part. The children are delightful, notably Georgette McKee, who is already a charming little actress, though only fifteen. Almost equally good are Montgomery Clift, Joan Tompkins, Edwin Philips and Clare Woodbury. Admirable character bits are given by Geraldine Kay as Maria, and Sheldon Leonard as Gabriel. Mr. Mitchell's staging is excellent. (At the Forty-eighth Street Theatre.)

Prisoners of War

EXACTLY the reason for giving this play of the post-war years at this late date I do not know. Presented originally in London in 1925 by Nigel Playfair, it possibly expressed the neurasthenia of the time. It is written by J. R. Ackerley and deals with a group of British officers interned in Switzerland. They are with one or two exceptions a precious lot: finicky, nervous, quarrelsome, morbid and, in one case, that of Captain Conrad, with whom we are apparently asked to sympathize, definitely abnormal. They bicker over trifles, they talk, they jitter, like a lot of hysterical women. The only apparently normal one of them commits suicide when he hears of the death of his wife, and Captain Conrad goes mad at the end. We see him seated, as the curtain falls, hugging a potted plant.

It was, to say the least, a trying evening, and it seemed a pity to see actors of the caliber of Francis Compton and Lowell Gilmore thrown away on such uninteresting and unsavory doings. Barton Hepburn played Captain Conrad realistically enough, but nevertheless ineffectively. There may be a good case made for a play like "The Children's Hour"; there can be none drawn up for "Prisoners of War." (At the Ritz Theatre.)

Three Men on a Horse

THIS is a farce and on the whole a most amusing one. Its story is utterly preposterous, and those who aren't willing to check their brains at the box-office won't enjoy "Three Men on a Horse." The three men don't ride the horse, they bet on the horses. The tale is that of a little clerk who lives in a New York suburb and amuses himself by picking out winners on the race-track, though he never bets on them. He feels that if he ever should bet he would lose. But while it is a game merely to amuse himself, he has an uncanny ability in picking winners.

The little clerk has a quarrel with his wife, gets drunk, and meets three race-track touts, who discover the book in which he has put down his winners. They practically kidnap him and use his hunches to make money for themselves. They are enormously successful, but finally they persuade him to bet himself, and though they again win the little clerk feels that the spell is broken, and that hereafter he won't be able to pick the winners. So he becomes reconciled to his wife and all ends happily, except for the disappointment of the touts.

The success of a farce like this is dependent upon the speed of the action, the guffaws in the lines, and the physical vitality of the acting. The first is there except at times in the second act, the laughs are frequent, and the acting is filled with gusto. William Lynn as Edward Trowridge, the little clerk, is of course the central figure, and he plays with a delightfully comic pathos which reminds one somewhat of Chaplin. Almost equally good are Sam Levine as Patsy, the chief tout, and Shirley Booth as Mabel.

"Three Men on a Horse" is not precisely polite entertainment, and one or two of the lines might well have been omitted, but it is entertaining to those who can give themselves up to unthinking laughter. (At the Playhouse.)

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Communications

THE CHURCH MILITANT

Fort Wayne, Ind.

TO the Editor: The Catholic Church believes in clear-cut concepts. With these, the applications take care of themselves. The American system of political philosophy was, is and must continue to be along the same lines. Profundity and logical processes are difficult at times but their very difficulty argue their value.

Few Americans of the present day fully appreciate the clear-cut ideas of the relatively small group of the for-the-most-part wealthy aristocratic leaders of our colonial days. They differed among themselves but their differences were usually within the compass of a workable agreement. Their statements of principle were not answers to current conditions but a sculpturing of thought that would stand the ravages of conditions tomorrow, be they what they may. That they have so withstood any erosion is evinced by the fact that they now exist after more than 150 years of time, that have seen the United States expand from a closely knit population on the Atlantic seaboard to a world power, far-flung over a vast expanse of dissimilar geographical areas. Like Topsy, we may have just grown up, in a geographical sense, but somehow in spite of ourselves we have managed to preserve at least a mental respect for the rightness of those whom we regard as ancestors, even if we be first-generation Americans.

Standing before the monument which marks the site of the battle of Germantown recently, I read an inscription thereon. It was a quotation from Penn, a jewel of political thought in the American terms of "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." It read tersely, concisely: "Liberty without obedience is confusion and obedience without liberty is slavery."

There is the answer to the anarchists, the raspy-throated challengers of authority, but there also, the answer to the Stalins and the new dictatorial hybrids, who decree that man may serve himself but only after he has served the purposes of the State.

Catholics and Americans to be worthy of their names must believe that things can be defined. Music, no matter how far advanced, must be founded on the scales, literature on the alphabet, mathematics on the digits, and schools of religious thought or political science on some sort of a well-anchored *Credo*.

In the present tug-of-war between the capitalistic system and its ism foes, or, if you wish, the battle royal in which capitalism seems to be the one drawing all the blows first, the Catholic Church has been accorded an authority to police, at least by its voice, in ways that are gratifying. It is not an absurd deduction to trace the influence of the encyclical, "Quadragesimo Anno," through the underlying essence of the New Deal philosophy in respect to improved conditions for those who earn their living by the sweat of their brows. It may be that there has been a blundering in the attempts to apply the principles, but the principles have been recognized. That is much.

All of this leads to the point that the members of the "body militant" of the Catholic Church in the United States have a twofold duty, which they may or may not be properly discharging, dependent upon individual viewpoints. There must be a preservation of American political fundamentals and a greater extension of the economic thought which the two best-known social encyclicals outline. So far there seems to be a poverty of evidence to prove that either the clergy or the laity of the Church in America have succeeded in doing the most possible along this line. On the contrary, the leadership in America seems to have been seized by non-Catholics. It is not impossible that the Holy Father may be sensitive to this situation.

This criticism is of course a generality, subject to the well-known weakness of all generalities. While there may be a general apathy on the part of the whole, there has been unusual energy put forth by separate parts. The work which the National Council of Catholic Women is doing in interpreting Catholic Action in workaday terms is tremendous. In the particular medium-sized community where I reside, and its immediate environs, there are approximately 100 Catholic women's study clubs. Regular meetings of these clubs, comprising an estimated total membership of about 1,000, are devoted to analytical discussions which a few years ago were of commanding interest only in college classrooms. The future influence of this movement, already well under way, is easily imaginable. It cannot help but have a powerful influence upon the future of America and the Catholic Church, if properly duplicated in all the dioceses of the United States. Other Catholic groups are joining with the National Council of Catholic Women. May the movement continue to grow and make itself effectively felt.

CLIFFORD B. WARD.

THE FARMER PARISH

Granger, Iowa.

TO the Editor: This letter is a reply to a communication by Frank Deuringer from the Middle West on the farmer parish, in THE COMMONWEAL for January 4.

I believe in carrying out in a practical way the sound program of the American hierarchy: "One hope for relief in the universal misery of the present lies in the reversal of the policy which produced the factory and the factory system. The reversal without depriving men of the benefits of industrial progress would reinstate them as independent home owners in rural communities. Such a change in the living conditions of millions of people would be a revolution, but some radical adjustment in restoring the balance between rural and urban population is imperative if our country is to survive and if our civilization is not to disappear."

One method is the rural-industrial community, as planned by the Subsistence Homesteads Division of the Department of the Interior. Plots of ground of from one to five acres, modern homes if at all possible, a barn, etc. A thirty-year amortization term at 3 percent interest and no taxes, making the monthly payments $14.60 for the average homestead costing $3,500. Here the industrial

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income is supplemented by the farming project. The results will be: better social, educational and religious facilities. Results for the church: better and more parishioners nearer school and church, more income for a bigger family, more tithes for God's works.

The other method is the family-size farm. There is a need for a better balance in our population. Why should a country pastor see his best young people move to the city? How can we build 10,000 strong rural parishes if farms are getting into the hands of fewer every day? The large farm does not mean more leisure, more comfort or more income. Grasping for too much we hold nothing. Farming on a scale of twenty, to forty, to sixty acres to the family is not possible everywhere and it must be planned intelligently. Only a few localities afford soil and atmospheric conditions suited to this purpose. Such style of farming should be made possible and encouraged where economically sound. It should be possible for a young couple to settle on a family-size farm, pay off the debt on a long amortization term and a low interest rate. This would work for the preservation and prosperity of the state and certainly it would be a blessing to the Church.

I am a country pastor; I shall have fifty subsistence homesteads within one mile of our church and school. I look forward to purchasing a Packard! I only wish I could get fifty young couples to settle on family-size farms. Then I would gladly show your correspondent my financial report and my baptismal record at the end of five years!

But then, I live in Dallas County, Iowa, the garden spot of the world!

Rev. L. G. Ligutti.

COSMIC GODS

Brookline, Mass.

TO the Editor: I wonder if Monsignor Sheen is not misinformed when he attributes to Newton the grotesque idea that God is only a kind of *deus ex machina,* to be called on to explain what is otherwise inexplicable in nature?

The late Father Hagen, director of the Vatican Observatory, in his article on Science and the Church in "The Catholic Encyclopedia," lists Newton among those who "wrote with great reverence of God and His wonderful creation." And Father Hagen seems in accord with Newton's biographer, Sir David Brewster.

According to Sir David Brewster, he was a firm believer in Revelation, abhorred persecution, invariably checked Dr. Halley when the latter said anything disrespectful to religion, and wrote to Dr. Bentley that the motions of the planets could not spring from any natural cause alone, but were impressed by an intelligent agent.

The latest "Britannica" says that Brewster is the author of the standard biography, but I refer to an earlier and shorter life.

In these days of militant atheism, both accuracy and the interests of religion require that the greatest name in science be listed as it was by Father Hagen.

Joseph Dwight.

RADIO AND THE POET

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor: I was very much interested in A. M. Sullivan's article on "Radio and the Poet" (November 30). Let us hope that the radio will bring back the recital of poetry by sympathetic bards to replace the reading of poetry. We learn much more surely, even though it may be more slowly, through the ear than the eye. Education in the present day is dependent too much on reading and not as much as it should be on hearing.

I wish, however, that Mr. Sullivan had not told us that "movable type was invented in the sixteenth century." The actual invention came before the middle of the fifteenth century. Of course it is only a slip of the pen but it is surprising how many people think of printing as a modern invention though it is entirely a medieval invention.

The most beautiful book ever printed is the Gutenberg Bible, and that was issued in 1456, and the printers had been working at it for some years. Probably some copies of Donatus had been printed before 1450. Before 1501, the beginning of the sixteenth century, according to Pollard who was for many years Keeper of Printed Books in the British Museum, some 20,000,000 volumes had issued from the presses of Europe. There were probably some 300 books printed in Mexico, that is, separate works, during the sixteenth century.

James J. Walsh.

THE LETTER-BOX

The Commonweal Editor receives a great many more interesting communications than he can publish. Nor is it possible to choose the best, since considerations of space and other practical matters are necessarily of the greatest importance. Accordingly we have decided to provide, henceforth, résumés of letters which have, for one reason or another, to be "sidetracked." Dr. C. J. McGillicuddy, of Boston, is puzzled about the situation in Mexico. If, he writes, the present government there has been set up "in opposition to an overwhelming Catholic majority, it would appear that the Catholics in Mexico are a quite helpless, hopeless lot." But if the majority assented, something must be wrong with the clergy. At any rate, he feels that "denunciation of the Mexican government is a rhetorical futility." We are inclined to agree, having always felt that the proper line of action was not to weaken the Mexican government but to strengthen the Mexican Church. But we would add that doing things against the will of a majority is common governmental practise these days. The Reverend Thomas F. Burke, of Jersey City, N. J., defines liberty as "the right to do what is permitted." It seems to him that the "rugged individualism" of Herbert Hoover is discountenanced by the encyclical, "Rerum Novarum." Monica Selwin-Tait, of Boston, calls attention to the lending libraries established by the Religious of the Cenacle in a number of large cities. Katherine M. Godley, of Watertown, N. Y., agrees with "that awful person, Clarence Darrow" on the

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subject of crime's cause. She stigmatizes "society's attitude toward the petty crook and wrongdoer, which is one of vengeance and malice, while it condones, nine times out of ten, the malpractises of those in high places." Well, may we suggest that it is all very human—that we set traps for mice, and feed the bears regally in zoos. Mr. A. J. Mosack, of Detroit, feels that the New Deal is too frequently an excuse for uttering nonsense. He believes in President Roosevelt, but dislikes the persons who wish to change the American form of government. Mr. Paul Hueber, of Syracuse, N. Y., is critical of the way things are going. "The 1928-1929 spree in Wall Street," he writes, "will be considered a piker compared to the one we're now on; and will we have a headache!" Mr. Leo J. Vashchyla, of Elmhurst, Penn., comments on "the utter historic shallowness" of Mr. Arthur Brisbane. The said Mr. Brisbane had stated in large type that: "Galileo announced new world; so they put him into prison." Need it be remarked again that Galileo's trouble was not "new worlds"? He was simply unfortunate in having been born when authority was dignified, and in not possessing the proper antenna for the perception of dignity. Mr. Arthur J. Conway, of Cincinnati, wonders: "What is Catholic Action?" He is not doubting that it has a meaning. He is, rather, puzzled "because it has ten thousand meanings." We have pondered a little on that subject ourselves. Perhaps we shall have something to say about it. V. J. Hope, of Saint Paul, Minn., agrees with Hilaire Belloc that persecution is good for the Church. This is a difficult and complex question. We suggest that our correspondent read Saint Augustine's "City of God" carefully. There was an author who knew quite a little about persecution. Mr. H. C. Hensel, of Seattle, Wash., corroborates Father John O'Brien's case against agnostic science by arguing that "to deny spirituality is to deny the existence of intelligence." But how can, he reasons, anybody who looks at the world deny intelligence? Mr. P. W. Croake, of Los Angeles, assumes that we have heard of Father Coughlin. He is right. But when he asks why "THE COMMONWEAL chooses to ignore the valiant fight now being made by this priestly champion of the people," our answer is that we have published remarks on Father Coughlin and will do so again. Mrs. Rose Roy, of Los Angeles, sent us an intelligent and able plea in behalf of study clubs for the Catholic laity, who must be taught the meaning of *sentire cum Ecclesia.* John J. O'Connor, of Washington, D. C., writes in behalf of the thriving Catholic Evidence Guild of his city to say that this organization does not wish to adopt David Goldstein's suggestion and be dubbed "Campaigners for Christ." Mr. William E. Kerrish, of Brookline, Mass., notes the pertinence of the Governor of Tabasco's action in naming his three sons, Lenin, Lucifer and Satan. In Mr. Kerrish's opinion, the alignment is perfect. Sacerdos, of Washington (again D. C.), criticizes the use of the abbreviation "Rev." and suggests the English use, "Revd." We for our part would cheerfully adopt this suggestion, if it met with the general approval of the American clergy. May we have opinions concerning it? Thank you.

THE EDITORS.

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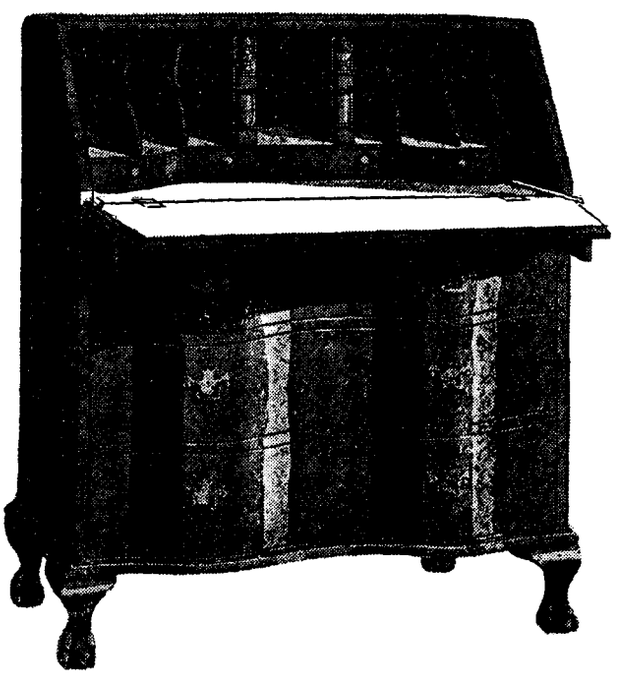

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Next Week

THE VATICAN AND NATIONALISM, by George Seldes, is a most informative recital of the facts of the Vatican's benevolent internationalism—to use political terms which are only partly descriptive of the universal spiritual mission of the Church—in a world wracked by nationalistic rivalries and hatreds and the violent and oppressive regimentation by governments of their own citizens. The proper understanding of the facts recited by this article is essential to a grasp of contemporary history tempered with good-will and wisdom rather than with prejudiced emotionalism. . . . CARDINAL BOURNE, by Shane Leslie, which was announced for this week, has been held over until the next issue. This is a remarkably alive portrait of an eminent churchman and recital of how he administered his high duties during times of great change and uncertainty—a Cardinal Archbishop who, says the writer, "stood for Rome at the center of the British Empire." "With the coming and passage of awful events," the writer adds, "he grew in stature. . . . His greatest difficulty was also the source of his strength, the pillar on which he had to rest himself as a Catholic Primate in England: the Irish." . . . THE TOWNSEND PLAN, by Bayard O. Wheeler, undertakes to expose the fallacies underlying the scheme to retire all persons over sixty years of age on a $200 a month pension. "Once more a money illusion as 'old as the hills and as new as the dawn' comes out of the West," says the writer. "The pernicious fallacy in which the Townsend Plan finds root is the belief that wealth and money are the same and that multiplying money increases wealth and purchasing power in the same ratio. . . . The pension outlay would equal one-half of the total present income of all the people of the United States."

Books

The Soul and God

A Primer of Prayer, by Joseph McSorley, C. S. P. New York: Longmans, Green and Company. $1.25.

THIS is the rarest of all types of spiritual book—a book written so clearly, so directly and simply that it is immediately understandable to the very ordinary intelligence; and yet so rich in spiritual intuition, so full of exact and tested knowledge of what concerns the soul in its relation to God, that it may be truly called a basic work on prayer. Its most striking feature is its individuality of spirit; yet the title indicates its purpose very accurately. It is not a collection of personal meditations, or informally related spiritual essays, but a treatise, accompanied by suggestive and concrete instructions.

Under "Vocal Prayer," the worth of words is considered by the test of their ability to lift up the mind and will to God, and some excellent examples of home-made prayers stimulate the reader to the fruitful exercise of composing similar expressions. The process of "Praying Slowly" is analyzed. Beautiful examples of the short aspiration from classic sources complete the section.

"Meditation," the next step, is an especially valuable chapter. It presents outlines of sample meditations which, though not elaborate, are arranged with the care and skill of much more famous spiritual exercises to dispose the mind devoutly and lead it by progressive stages to that essential realization of some one divine truth, with its corresponding lesson to the will, which is the whole purpose of meditation. "Beyond Meditation" has encouraging special directions for the unmethodic devout, and a brief, clear treatment of habitual prayer.

The main purposes of prayer—petition, thanksgiving, contrition, adoration, abandonment, consecration—have a chapter each of moving and illuminating explanation. A final section on "Helps and Hindrances" reviews realistically and constructively the day-by-day circumstances of the average life lived in the world, and demonstrates how even the everlasting preoccupations, the shifting chaos of impressions which makes up most of the waking consciousness, are amenable to calm, steady effort and the resolution "to cultivate seriously a habit of prayer." The means for establishing the indispensable minimum of solitude, for resisting distractions, for utilizing random idle moments, for maintaining the proper moral background for prayer, are all touched upon. Chapters on the Passion as a varied theme for meditation, and on the invocation of the saints, and a bibliography, small but choice, complete the book.

This brief outline will show that the "Primer of Prayer" systematizes, very simply but without essential loss, the whole science of prayer. It does this, not abstractly, but helpfully and hopefully, bringing within practical range the high way of Christian life which many feel to be too difficult even to attempt. But beyond this, as noted above, the book has an even rarer merit. It has the power of revitalizing abstruse or overfamiliar spiritual

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conceptions, of investing them with a direct, fresh and moving reality. Reading here of the love of God, one is taken beyond the words to some authentic sense of what the words signify. It is this—surely one of the crucial tests of spiritual writing—which puts the seal of permanent value upon Father McSorley's book.

MARY KOLARS.

A Restoration

The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden. Studies in Some Aspects of Seventeenth-century Thought, by Louis I. Bredvold. Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press. $2.50.

"DRYDEN lived before the age of confessions," Professor Bredvold says, "and he never troubled to enlighten his readers regarding his own intellectual history." No one, I hope, could want for Dryden another of the vicarious confessions with which our century has been so generous in providing the men of the past; and Professor Bredvold, whose devotion to his author is not presumption, has not prepared one. But there are nowadays again a good many readers of Dryden, who would welcome enlightenment; and for some of these Professor Bredvold has "troubled" infinitely.

His purpose has been to reconstruct, so far as possible, the intellectual world in which Dryden lived, in order to understand better the intellectual life which he lived within that world. "Not until we understand fully the various implications of ideas as they presented themselves to Dryden," he says, "by what paths he arrived at his final intellectual destination, to what influences he was subjected on the way . . . interpreting these in terms of the movement of ideas in his own age . . . can we appreciate his reactions to them and pass judgment on his consistency and significance." So this book is a record of the "movement of ideas"; ideas which excited the seventeenth century and still excite the twentieth. There are few of us who will be able to say that any part of it is dull.

What Professor Bredvold has to say about the New Science of the seventeenth century, and its relation to the thought of poets and divines and ordinary men, is interesting; and what he has to say about the political problems which confronted the first Whigs and Tories. But the most interesting, and I think the most valuable, part of his work is in the chapter in which he writes of English Catholic apologetics in the seventeenth century, a subject quite neglected. Professor Bredvold has read a multitude of the curious apologetical tracts and pamphlets of the period which must have cost him a great deal of "trouble"; and he has bravely reduced their jarring confusion to a certain unity. It is a pity, though, that there was no better word for him to use than the colored "fideism" which he applies to the Catholic writers in opposing them to the Anglicans, for whom he must use, again, a worse word (rationalism) than he shows them to deserve. But, though we may not like the word "fideism" in itself, and much less its service as a bracketing for Montaigne and Sir Thomas Browne,

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Charron and Pascal, the "Libertines" and the apologists, we confess the dilemma which confined the writer to this word, or none, and we understand the point. Nevertheless the word is bad, and I think the most cautious reader will find it at times exasperating and misleading. I suspect, too, that its equivocation has betrayed Professor Bredvold himself a few times. Not, though, into making this chapter anything less than the most absorbing and authoritative treatment of its subject in print.

Students of history will know better than I how to judge many parts of the book, but specially the long Appendix which treats, with much fresh documentation, the position of Catholics and their politics under James II. But every kind of student, and surely the "common reader" too, will be glad the book has been written; for it was needed to illuminate and explain the working of a mind which, though I think not remarkably profound or philosophically "great," was, in Professor Bredvold's words, "sincere and significant and interesting," and worthy of the excellent studies which have of late been made into its operation and its creations. Beside the best of those this new one will have its place.

CRAIG LA DRIERE.

Louis Napoleon

Another Caesar, by Alfred Neumann; translated by Eden and Cedar Paul. New York. Alfred A. Knopf. $3.00.

NO form of literature offers its creator so many difficulties or temptations as the historical novel, for not only does it present all of the problems of the biographer and the historian with their accompanying pitfalls of psychology, but, most of all, it demands an accuracy of emphasis not always adjusted to the artistry or technique of the novel. Then, too, a successful historical novel must be more than authoritative; it must be substantial and comprehensive as well.

Now here is a book that more nearly approaches all of these requirements than any other I have read in recent years. It is accurate, although its author cleverly takes advantage of the documentary evidence upon which historians disagree, choosing for his purpose the most dramatic. He puts credence, for instance, in the gossip that the Emperor himself was once the lover of his stepdaughter, whom he forced his brother to marry, and suggests that Charles may have been Napoleon's son. More questionable is his insistence upon Louis's illegitimacy, an opinion difficult to establish since the child was obviously premature.

It is substantial in that its 589 pages chronicle only those years until Louis proclaimed himself emperor. It is comprehensive in its sustained portrayal of the social and political background in which moved Louis Napoleon, enigmatic, timid hero; weak and gutteral of speech; with a grotesque nose and eyes that drew people to his personal desire or doubtful cause; lustful but never loving, friendless while smothered with adulation, ambitious beyond his slightest qualifications.

But no more vividly is he presented than are those who

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surrounded him: Hortense, his mother, hero-worshiper of Napoleon, and rumored to have been his mistress; King Louis of Holland, his father, crippled and ungainly, ignored, abused, or demanded by the Queen, according to her needs; Persigny, his political servant, groveling and assiduous; Miss Gordon, a slave to his ambiguous manner and zealous for his cause, killing herself because of his neglect; Eleanor Howard, whose jewels he accepted yet whom he never allowed to enter the palace; Eleanor Vergeot, his companion in prison, who bore him sons, yet whose only reward was a marriage he arranged for her. All of these and many more were drawn to this uncouth and ignoble little man with no perceptible distinction beyond the shadow of a great name, who used them without hesitation and who rewarded only with silver those who had given him their souls.

Such a book comes seldom.

VIRGINIA CHASE PERKINS.

A New England Soul

Woman of This Earth, by Frances Frost. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. $2.00.

MISS FROST'S achievement in the writing of this long poem is an important one. With great emotional sensitiveness, with an admirable mastery of her poetic technique, she tells the story of a woman of the New England hills, her love, her renunciation, the birth of the child of that love, and of her gradual acceptance and understanding of the continuity of life and the inevitability of death. The theme is, in a sense, allegorical: the woman represents the earth force; the man, the sea. Throughout the poem runs a strong contrapuntal harmony of the changing season, beautifully introduced in short lyric passages. The whole has both strength and unity.

Occasionally, however, the reader is aware of a certain sense of emotional strain, and of a too great complexity of word and phrase to suit the essential simplicity of the idea. Such a passage as,

> "Must you have voyages to apprehend
> what stars perpend on a wedge of mountains black
> with melted snows, what stringent waters gash
> precarious rocks with perpendicular voice
> whose vigorous gutterals submit to thirst
> of tilted valleys?"

though almost unimpeachable from a technical point of view in the skilful handling of the subtle alliteration, the excellent working out of the conceit, yet in a sense defeats its purpose by calling attention rather to the words themselves than to the impression they are required to convey. The startling and esoteric adjective is rampant just now in poetry. It is a valuable tool, but, like a touch of scarlet in a painting, can be too often used.

Such criticisms are, however, overshadowed by the exquisitely felicitous descriptions of the New England countryside, by the fineness of the imagery, in fact by the fundamental beauty of the poem as a whole. "Woman of This Earth" helps to place Miss Frost among those modern poets whose work has real value and significance.

A. K. PARKER.

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Briefer Mention

Italy in English Literature, by Roderick Marshall. New York: Columbia University Press. $3.50.

DR. MARSHALL'S book is part of the study of Italo-British relationships which he hopes to write. It deals primarily with the year between 1755 and 1815, when English writers began to recover from the depreciation of Italy which the reign of French taste had inculcated and to assert a new fondness for Dante, Ariosto and the rest. After 1755, indeed, England went "native," and doubtless it was to a considerable extent the return to the Elizabethans which prompted a vigorous interest in southern literature. But Italians themselves had a hand in the revival. Such men as Baretti, whose friend and benefactor William Huggins translated "Orlando Furioso," worked hard as unpaid but tireless propagandists. Mr. Marshall's detailed and scholarly exposition carries the story into mid-channel of the Romantic movement. It is to be hoped that a later study will do full justice to Wordsworth's interest in Saint Francis, not mentioned in this book. But possibly Dr. Marshall's gaze is too completely riveted on belles-lettres to take in more solid matter.

The Best Poems of 1934; *selected by Thomas Moult. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company.* $2.00.

WE ARE a bit late in noticing Mr. Moult's latest anthology, which is the thirteenth in a series generally and genuinely admired by readers of verse. It is unusual that a selection from current poetry should keep its place so long; it is still more extraordinary that Mr. Moult should have remained loyal to his own taste, which is individual but good. This year's volume has a number of fine things, among them Elizabeth Coatsworth's splendidly lyrical, meditative "Morning and Evening Were the First Day," Frances Frost's "Song," and Robert Frost's "On the Heart's Beginning to Cloud the Mind." There is a large group of sonnets, most of them rather above the average. To test the reader's willingness—no less than to be accurately reflective of current trends—Mr. Moult gives younger poets their opportunity, as witness Kenneth Allen Robinson's ballad, "Luke Tanner's Daughter," and Myra Marini's "Funeral." The book as a whole has a fine texture.

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